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W. Scott

WAVERLEY NOVELS.

VOLUME 13.

TALES OF MY LANDLORD.

THIRD SERIES.

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.—LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groats',
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin notes,
An' faith he'll prent it.
Burns.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

I.

PARKER'S EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH A GENERAL PREFACE, AN INTRODUCTION TO EACH NOVEL, AND NOTES, HISTORICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE, BY

THE AUTHOR.

PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL H. PARKER, BOSTON, FOR
DESILVER, THOMAS, AND CO.,
PHILADELPHIA.

1836.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

THE author, on a former occasion,* declined giving the real source from which he drew the tragic subject of this history, because, though occurring at a distant period, it might possibly be unpleasing to the feelings of the descendants of the parties. But as he finds an account of the circumstances given in the Notes to Law's Memorials,† by his ingenious friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., and also indicated in his reprint of the Rev. Mr. Symson's poems, appended to the Description of Galloway, as the original of the Bride of Lammermoor, the author feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connexions of his own, who lived very near the period, and were closely related to the family of the Bride.

It is well known that the family of Dalrymple, which has produced, within the space of two centuries, as many men of talent, civil and military, and of literary, political, and professional eminence, as any house in Scotland, first rose into distinction in the person of James Dalrymple, one of the most eminent lawyers that ever lived, though the labours of his powerful mind were unhappily exercised on a subject so limited as Scottish Jurisprudence, on which he has composed an admirable work.

He married Margaret, daughter to Ross of Balniel, with whom he obtained a considerable estate. She was an able, politic, and highminded woman, so successful in

* See Introduction to the Chronicles of the Canongate.

† Law's Memorials, p. 226.

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what she undertook, that the vulgar, no way partial to her husband or her family, imputed her success to necromancy. According to the popular belief, this Dame Margaret purchased the temporal prosperity of her family from the Master whom she served, under a singular condition, which is thus narrated by the historian of her grandson, the great Earl of Stair. "She lived to a great age, and at her death desired that she might not be put under ground, but that her coffin should be placed upright on one end of it, promising, that while she remained in that situation, the Dalrymples should continue in prosperity. What was the old lady's motive for such a request, or whether she really made such a promise, I cannot take upon me to determine; but it is certain her coffin stands upright in the aisle of the church of Kirkliston, the burial place of the family."* The talents of this accomplished race were sufficient to have accounted for the dignities which many members of the family attained, without any supernatural assistance. But their extraordinary prosperity was attended by some equally singular family misfortunes, of which that which befell their eldest daughter was at once unaccountable and melancholy.

Miss Janet Dalrymple, daughter of the first Lord Stair, and Dame Margaret Ross, had engaged herself without the knowledge of her parents to the Lord Rutherford, who was not acceptable to them either on account of his political principles, or his want of fortune. The young couple broke a piece of gold together, and pledged their troth in the most solemn manner; and it is said the young lady imprecated dreadful evils on herself should she break her plighted faith. Shortly after, a suitor who was favoured by Lord Stair, and still more so by his lady, paid his addresses to Miss Dalrymple. The young lady refused the proposal, and being pressed on the subject, confessed her secret engagement. Lady Stair, a woman accustomed to universal submission, (for even her husband did not dare to contradict her,) treated this objection as a trifle,

* Memoirs of John Earl of Stair, by an Impartial Hand. London, printed for C. Cobbet, p. 7.

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and insisted upon her daughter yielding her consent to marry the new suitor, David Dunbar, son and heir to David Dunbar of Baldoon, in Wigtonshire. The first lover, a man of very high spirit, then interfered by letter, and insisted on the right he had acquired by his troth plighted with the young lady. Lady Stair sent him for answer, that her daughter, sensible of her undutiful behaviour in entering into a contract unsanctioned by her parents, had retracted her unlawful vow, and now refused to fulfil her engagement with him.

The lover, in return, declined positively to receive such an answer from any one but his mistress in person; and as she had to deal with a man who was both of a most determined character, and of too high condition to be trifled with, Lady Stair was obliged to consent to an interview between Lord Rutherford and her daughter. But she took care to be present in person, and argued the point with the disappointed and incensed lover with pertinacity equal to his own. She particularly insisted on the Levitical law, which declares, that a woman shall be free of a vow which her parents dissent from. This is the passage of Scripture she founded on:—

"If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

"If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

"And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

"But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."—Numbers, xxx. 2, 3, 4, 5.

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While the mother insisted on these topics, the lover in vain conjured the daughter to declare her own opinion and feelings. She remained totally overwhelmed, as it seemed,—mute, pale, and motionless as a statue. Only at her mother's command, sternly uttered, she summoned strength enough to restore to her plighted suitor the piece of broken gold, which was the emblem of her troth. On this he burst forth into a tremendous passion, took leave of the mother with maledictions, and as he left the apartment, turned back to say to his weak, if not fickle mistress, "For you, madam, you will be a world's wonder;" a phrase by which some remarkable degree of calamity is usually implied. He went abroad, and returned not again. If the last Lord Rutherford was the unfortunate party, he must have been the third who bore that title, and who died in 1685.

The marriage betwixt Janet Dalrymple and David Dunbar of Baldoon now went forward, the bride showing no repugnance, but being absolutely passive in every thing her mother commanded or advised. On the day of the marriage, which, as was then usual, was celebrated by a great assemblage of friends and relations, she was the same—sad, silent, and resigned, as it seemed, to her destiny. A lady, very nearly connected with the family, told the author that she had conversed on the subject with one of the brothers of the bride, a mere lad at the time, who had ridden before his sister to church. He said her hand, which lay on his as she held her arm round his waist, was as cold and damp as marble. But, full of his new dress, and the part he acted in the procession, the circumstance, which he long afterwards remembered with bitter sorrow and compunction, made no impression on him at the time.

The bridal feast was followed by dancing; the bride and bridegroom retired as usual, when of a sudden the most wild and piercing cries were heard from the nuptial chamber. It was then the custom, to prevent any coarse pleasantry which old times perhaps admitted, that the key of the nuptial chamber should be intrusted to the bride-man. He was called upon, but refused at first to give it

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up, till the shrieks became so hideous that he was compelled to hasten with others to learn the cause. On opening the door, they found the bridegroom lying across the threshold, dreadfully wounded, and streaming with blood. The bride was then sought for: She was found in the corner of the large chimney, having no covering save her shift, and that dabbled in gore. There she sat grinning at them, mopping and mowing, as I heard the expression used; in a word, absolutely insane. The only words she spoke were, "Tak up your bonny bridegroom." She survived this horrible scene little more than a fortnight, having been married on the 24th of August, and dying on the 12th of September 1669.

The unfortunate Baldoon recovered from his wounds, but sternly prohibited all inquiries respecting the manner in which he had received them. If a lady, he said, asked him any question upon the subject, he would neither answer her nor speak to her again while he lived; if a gentleman, he would consider it as a mortal affront, and demand satisfaction as having received such. He did not very long survive the dreadful catastrophe, having met with a fatal injury by a fall from his horse, as he rode between Leith and Holyrood-house, of which he died the next day, 28th March 1682. Thus a few years removed all the principal actors in this frightful tragedy.

Various reports went abroad on this mysterious affair, many of them very inaccurate, though they could hardly be said to be exaggerated. It was difficult at that time to become acquainted with the history of a Scottish family above the lower rank; and strange things sometimes took place there, into which even the law did not scrupulously inquire.

The credulous Mr. Law says, generally, that the Lord President Stair had a daughter, who "being married, the night she was *bride in*, [that is, bedded bride,] was taken from her bridegroom and *harled* [dragged] through the house, (by spirits, we are given to understand,) and soon afterwards died. Another daughter," he says, "was possessed by an evil spirit."

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My friend, Mr. Sharpe, gives another edition of the tale. According to his information, it was the bridegroom who wounded the bride. The marriage, according to this account, had been against her mother's inclination, who had given her consent in these ominous words: "You may marry him, but soon shall you repent it."

I find still another account darkly insinuated in some highly scurrilous and abusive verses, of which I have an original copy. They are docketed as being written, "Upon the late Viscount Stair and his family, by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw. The marginals by William Dunlop, writer in Edinburgh, a son of the Laird of Househill, and nephew to the said Sir William Hamilton." There was a bitter and personal quarrel and rivalry betwixt the author of this libel, a name which it richly deserves, and Lord President Stair; and the lampoon, which is written with much more malice than art, bears the following motto:—

"Stair's neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson, and the rest,
Are wry, false, witch, pests, parricide, possessed."

This malignant satirist, who calls up all the misfortunes of the family, does not forget the fatal bridal of Baldoon. He seems, though his verses are as obscure as unpoetical, to intimate, that the violence done to the bridegroom was by the intervention of the foul fiend to whom the young lady had resigned herself, in case she should break her contract with her first lover. His hypothesis is inconsistent with the account given in the note upon Law's Memorials, but easily reconcilable to the family tradition.

"In al Stair's offspring we no difference know,
They doe the females as the males bestow;
So he of's daughter's marriage gave the ward,
Like a true vassal, to Glenluce's Laird;
He knew what she did to her suitor plight,
If she her faith to Rutherfurd should slight,
Which, like his own, for greed he broke outright.
Nick did Baldoon's posterior right deride,
And, as first substitute, did seize the bride;

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Whate'er he to his mistress did or said,
He threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed,
Into the chimney did so his rival maul,
His bruised bones ne'er were cured but by the fall."*

One of the marginal notes ascribed to William Dunlop, applies to the above lines. "She had betrothed herself to Lord Rutherfoord under horrid imprecations, and afterwards married Baldoon, his nevoy, and her mother was the cause of her breach of faith."

The same tragedy is alluded to in the following couplet and note:—

"What train of curses that base brood pursues,
When the young nephew weds old uncle's spouse."

The note on the word *uncle* explains it as meaning "Rutherfoord, who should have married the Lady Baldoon, was Baldoon's uncle." The poetry of this satire on Lord Stair and his family was, as already noticed, written by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw, a rival of Lord Stair for the situation of President of the Court of Session; a person much inferior to that great lawyer in talents, and equally ill-treated by the calumny or just satire of his contemporaries, as an unjust and partial judge. Some of the notes are by that curious and laborious antiquary Robert Milne, who, as a virulent Jacobite, willingly lent a hand to blacken the family of Stair.†

Another poet of the period, with a very different purpose, has left an elegy, in which he darkly hints at and bemoans the fate of the ill-starred young person, whose very uncommon calamity Whitelaw, Dunlop, and Milne, thought a fitting subject for buffoonery and ribaldry. This bard of milder mood was Andrew Symson, before the Revolution minister of Kirkinner, in Galloway, and after his expulsion as an Episcopalian, following the humble

* The fall from his horse, by which he was killed.

† I have compared the satire, which occurs in the first volume of the curious little collection called a Book of Scottish Pasquils, 1827, with that which has a more full text, and more extended notes, and which is in my own possession, by gift of Thomas Thomson, Esq. Register-Depute. In the second Book of Pasquils, p. 72, is a most abusive epitaph on Sir James Hamilton of Whitelaw.

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occupation of a printer in Edinburgh. He furnished the family of Baldoon, with which he appears to have been intimate, with an elegy on the tragic event in their family. In this piece, he treats the mournful occasion of the bride's death with mysterious solemnity.

The verses bear this title—"On the unexpected death of the virtuous Lady Mrs. Janet Dalrymple, Lady Baldoon, younger," and afford us the precise dates of the catastrophe, which could not otherwise have been easily ascertained. "Nupta August 12. Domum Ducta August 24. Obiit September 12. Sepult. September 30, 1669." The form of the elegy is a dialogue betwixt a passenger and a domestic servant. The first, recollecting that he had passed that way lately, and seen all around enlivened by the appearances of mirth and festivity, is desirous to know what had changed so gay a scene into mourning. We preserve the reply of the servant as a specimen of Mr. Symson's verses, which are not of the first quality :—

——— "Sir, 'tis truth you've told,
We did enjoy great mirth ; but now, ah me!
Our joyful song's turn'd to an elegie.
A virtuous lady, not long since a bride,
Was to a hopeful plant by marriage tied,
And brought home hither. We did all rejoice,
Even for her sake. But presently our voice,
Was turn'd to mourning for that little time
That she'd enjoy : She waned in her prime,
For Atropos, with her impartial knife,
Soon cut her thread, and therewithal her life;
And for the time we may it well remember,
It being in unfortunate September ;
Where we must leave her till the resurrection,
'Tis then the Saints enjoy their full perfection."*

* This elegy is reprinted in the appendix to a topographical work by the same author, entitled "A Large Description of Galloway, by Andrew Symson, Minister of Kirkinner," 8vo. Taits, Edinburgh, 1823. The reverend gentleman's elegies are extremely rare, nor did the author ever see a copy but his own, which is bound up with the Tripatriarchicon, a religious poem from the Biblical History, by the same author.

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Mr. Symson also poured forth his elegiac strains upon the fate of the widowed bridegroom, on which subject, after a long and querulous effusion, the poet arrives at the sound conclusion, that if Baldoon had walked on foot, which it seems was his general custom, he would have escaped perishing by a fall from horseback. As the work in which it occurs is so scarce as almost to be unique, and as it gives us the most full account of one of the actors in this tragic tale which we have rehearsed, we will, at the risk of being tedious, insert some short specimens of Mr. Symson's composition. It is entitled,—

"A Funeral Elegie, occasioned by the sad and much lamented death of that worthily respected, and very much accomplished gentleman, David Dunbar, younger of Baldoon, only son and apparent heir to the right worshipful Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, Knight Baronet. He departed this life on March 28, 1682, having received a bruise by a fall, as he was riding the day preceding betwixt Leith and Holy-Rood-House; and was honourably interred in the Abbey church of Holy-Rood-House, on April 4, 1682."

"Men might, and very justly too, conclude
Me guilty of the worst ingratitude,
Should I be silent, or should I forbear
At this sad accident to shed a tear;
A tear! said I? ah! that's a petit thing,
A very lean, slight, slender offering,
Too mean, I'me sure, for me, wherewith t'attend
The unexpected funeral of my friend—
A glass of briny tears charg'd up to th' brim,
Would be too few for me to shed for him."

The poet proceeds to state his intimacy with the deceased, and the constancy of the young man's attendance on public worship, which was regular, and had such effect upon two or three others that were influenced by his example,

"So that my Muse 'gainst Priscian avers,
He, only he, *were* my parishioners;
Yea, and my only hearers."

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He then describes the deceased in person and manners, from which it appears that more accomplishments were expected in the composition of a fine gentleman in ancient than modern times:

" His body, though not very large or tall,
Was sprightly, active, yea and strong withal.
His constitution was, if right I've guess'd,
Blood mixt with choler, said to be the best.
In's gesture, converse, speech, discourse, attire,
He practis'd that which wise men still admire,
Commend, and recommend. What's that? you'l say;
'Tis this: He ever choos'd the middle way
'Twixt both th' extremes. Amost in ev'ry thing
He did the like, 'tis worth our noticing:
Sparing, yet not a niggard; liberal,
And yet not lavish or a prodigal,
As knowing when to spend and when to spare;
And that's a lesson which not many are
Acquainted with. He bashful was, yet daring
When he saw cause, and yet therein but sparing;
Familiar, yet not common, for he knew
To condescend, and keep his distance too.
He us'd, and that most commonly, to go
On foot; I wish that he had still done so.
Th' affairs of court were unto him well known:
And yet mean while he slighted not his own.
He knew full well how to behave at court,
And yet but seldome did thereto resort;
But lov'd the country life, choos'd to inure
Himself to past'rage and agriculture;
Proving, improving, ditching, trenching, draining,
Viewing, reviewing, and by those means gaining;
Planting, transplanting, levelling, erecting
Walls, chambers, houses, terraces; projecting
Now this, now that device, this draught, that measure,
That might advance his profit with his pleasure.
Quick in his bargains, honest in commerce,
Just in his dealings, being much averse
From quirks of law, still ready to refer
His cause t' an honest country arbiter.
He was acquainted with cosmography,
Arithmetic, and modern history;
With architecture and such arts as these,

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Which I may call specifick sciences
Fit for a gentleman; and surely he
That knows them not, at least in some degree,
May brook the title, but he wants the thing,
Is but a shadow scarce worth noticing.
He learned the French, be't spoken to his praise,
In very little more than fourty days."

Then comes the full burst of woe, in which, instead of saying much himself, the poet informs us what the ancients would have said on such an occasion:

"A heathen poet, at the news, no doubt,
Would have exclaimed, and furiously cry'd out
Against the fates, the destinies and starrs,
What! this the effect of planetarie warrs!
We might have seen him rage and rave, yea worse,
'Tis very like we might have heard him curse
The year, the month, the day, the hour, the place,
The company, the wager, and the race;
Decry all recreations, with the names
Of Isthmian, Pythian, and Olympick games;
Exclaim against them all both old and new,
Both the Nemæan and the Lethæan too:
Adjudge all persons under highest pain,
Always to walk on foot, and then again
Order all horses to be hough'd, that we
Might never more the like adventure see."

Supposing our readers have had enough of Mr. Symson's verses, and finding nothing more in his poem worthy of transcription, we return to the tragic story.

It is needless to point out to the intelligent reader, that the witchcraft of the mother consisted only in the ascendency of a powerful mind over a weak and melancholy one, and that the harshness with which she exercised her superiority in a case of delicacy, had driven her daughter first to despair, then to frenzy. Accordingly, the author has endeavoured to explain the tragic tale on this principle. Whatever resemblance Lady Ashton may be supposed to possess to the celebrated Dame Margaret Ross, the reader must not suppose that there was any idea of

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tracing the portrait of the first Lord Viscount Stair in the tricky and mean-spirited Sir William Ashton. Lord Stair, whatever might be his moral qualities, was certainly one of the first statesmen and lawyers of his age.

The imaginary castle of Wolf's Crag has been identified by some lover of locality with that of Fast Castle. The author is not competent to judge of the resemblance betwixt the real and imaginary scene, having never seen Fast Castle except from the sea. But fortalices of this description are found occupying, like ospreys' nests, projecting rocks, or promontories, in many parts of the eastern coast of Scotland, and the position of Fast Castle seems certainly to resemble that of Wolf's Crag, as much as any other, while its vicinity to the mountain ridge of Lammermoor, renders the assimilation a probable one.

We have only to add, that the death of the unfortunate bridegroom by a fall from horseback, has been in the novel transferred to the no less unfortunate lover.

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THE

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

By cauk and keel to win your bread,
Wi' whigmaleeries for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed
To carry the gaberlunzie on.
Old Song.

Few have been in my secret while I was compiling these narratives, nor is it probable that they will ever become public during the life of their author. Even were that event to happen, I am not ambitious of the honoured distinction, *digito monstrarier*. I confess, that, were it safe to cherish such dreams at all, I should more enjoy the thought of remaining behind the curtain unseen, like the ingenious manager of Punch and his wife Joan, and enjoying the astonishment and conjectures of my audience. Then might I, perchance, hear the productions of the obscure Peter Pattieson praised by the judicious, and admired by the feeling, engrossing the young, and attracting even the old; while the critic traced their fame up to some name of literary celebrity, and the question, when, and by whom, these tales were written, filled up the pause of conversation in a hundred circles and coteries. This I may never enjoy during my lifetime; but farther than this, I am certain, my vanity should never induce me to aspire.

I am too stubborn in habits, and too little polished in manners, to envy or aspire to the honours assigned to my

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literary contemporaries. I could not think a whit more highly of myself, were I even found worthy to "come in place as a lion," for a winter in the great metropolis. I could not rise, turn round, and show all my honours, from the shaggy mane to the tufted tail, roar you an't were any nightingale, and so lie down again like a well-behaved beast of show, and all at the cheap and easy rate of a cup of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter as thin as a wafer. And I could ill stomach the fulsome flattery with which the lady of the evening indulges her show-monsters on such occasions, as she crams her parrots with sugar-plums, in order to make them talk before company. I cannot be tempted to "come aloft," for these marks of distinction, and, like imprisoned Sampson, I would rather remain—if such must be the alternative—all my life in the mill-house, grinding for my very bread, than be brought forth to make sport for the Philistine lords and ladies. This proceeds from no dislike, real or affected, to the aristocracy of these realms. But they have their place, and I have mine; and, like the iron and earthen vessels in the old fable, we can scarce come into collision without my being the sufferer in every sense. It may be otherwise with the sheets which I am now writing. These may be opened and laid aside at pleasure; by amusing themselves with the perusal, the great will excite no false hopes; by neglecting or condemning them, they will inflict no pain; and how seldom can they converse with those whose minds have toiled for their delight, without doing either the one or the other.

In the better and wiser tone of feeling, which Ovid only expresses in one line to retract in that which follows, I can address these quires—

Parve, nec invideo, sine me, liber, ibis in urbem.

Nor do I join the regret of the illustrious exile, that he himself could not in person accompany the volume, which he sent forth to the mart of literature, pleasure, and luxury. Were there not a hundred similar instances on record, the fate of my poor friend and school-fellow Dick

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Tinto, would be sufficient to warn me against seeking happiness, in the celebrity which attaches itself to a successful cultivator of the fine arts.

Dick Tinto, when he wrote himself artist, was wont to derive his origin from the ancient family of Tinto, of that ilk, in Lanarkshire, and occasionally hinted that he had somewhat derogated from his gentle blood, in using the pencil for his principal means of support. But if Dick's pedigree was correct, some of his ancestors must have suffered a more heavy declension, since the good man his father executed the necessary, and, I trust, the honest, but certainly not very distinguished employment, of tailor in ordinary to the village of Langdirdum in the west. Under his humble roof was Richard born, and to his father's humble trade was Richard, greatly contrary to his inclination, early indentured. Old Mr. Tinto had, however, no reason to congratulate himself upon having compelled the youthful genius of his son to forsake its natural bent. He fared like the school-boy, who attempts to stop with his finger the spout of a water cistern, while the stream, exasperated at this compression, escapes by a thousand uncalculated spirts, and wets him all over for his pains. Even so fared the senior Tinto, when his hopeful apprentice not only exhausted all the chalk in making sketches upon the shopboard, but even executed several caricatures of his father's best customers, who began loudly to murmur, that it was too hard to have their persons deformed by the vestments of the father, and to be at the same time turned into ridicule by the pencil of the son. This led to discredit and loss of practice, until the old tailor, yielding to destiny, and to the entreaties of his son, permitted him to attempt his fortune in a line for which he was better qualified.

There was about this time, in the village of Langdirdum, a peripatetic brother of the brush, who exercised his vocation *sub Jove frigido*, the object of admiration to all the boys of the village, but especially to Dick Tinto. The age had not yet adopted, amongst other unworthy

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retrenchments, that illiberal measure of economy, which, supplying by written characters the lack of symbolical representation, closes one open and easily accessible avenue of instruction and emolument against the students of the fine arts. It was not yet permitted to write upon the plaistered door-way of an alehouse, or the suspended sign of an inn, "The Old Magpie," or "The Saracen's Head," substituting that cold description for the lively effigies of the plumed chatterer, or the turban'd frown of the terrific soldan. That early and more simple age considered alike the necessities of all ranks, and depicted the symbols of good cheer so as to be obvious to all capacities; well judging, that a man, who could not read a syllable, might nevertheless love a pot of good ale as well as his better-educated neighbours, or even as the parson himself. Acting upon this liberal principle, publicans as yet hung forth the painted emblems of their calling, and sign-painters, if they seldom feasted, did not at least absolutely starve.

To a worthy of this decayed profession, as we have already intimated, Dick Tinto became an assistant; and thus, as is not unusual among heaven-born geniuses in this department of the fine arts, began to paint before he had any notion of drawing.

His talent for observing nature soon induced him to rectify the errors, and soar above the instructions, of his teacher. He particularly shone in painting horses, that being a favourite sign in the Scottish villages; and, in tracing his progress, it is beautiful to observe, how by degrees he learned to shorten the backs, and prolong the legs, of these noble animals, until they came to look less like crocodiles, and more like nags. Detraction, which always pursues merit with strides proportioned to its advancement, has indeed alleged, that Dick once upon a time painted a horse with five legs, instead of four. I might have rested his defence upon the license allowed to that branch of his profession, which, as it permits all sorts of singular and irregular combinations, may be allowed to extend itself so far as to bestow a limb supernumerary

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on a favourite subject. But the cause of a deceased friend is sacred ; and I disdain to bottom it so superficially. I have visited the sign in question, which yet swings exalted in the village of Langdirdum, and I am ready to depone upon oath, that what has been idly mistaken or misrepresented as being the fifth leg of the horse, is, in fact, the tail of that quadruped, and, considered with reference to the posture in which he is delineated, forms a circumstance, introduced and managed with great and successful, though daring art. The nag being represented in a rampant or rearing posture, the tail, which is prolonged till it touches the ground, appears to form a *point d'appui*, and gives the firmness of a tripod to the figure, without which it would be difficult to conceive, placed as the feet are, how the courser could maintain his ground without tumbling backwards. This bold conception has fortunately fallen into the custody of one by whom it is duly valued ; for, when Dick, in his more advanced state of proficiency, became dubious of the propriety of so daring a deviation from the established rules of art, and was desirous to execute a picture of the publican himself in exchange for this juvenile production, the courteous offer was declined by his judicious employer, who had observed, it seems, that when his ale failed to do its duty in conciliating his guests, one glance at his sign was sure to put them in good humour.

It would be foreign to my present purpose, to trace the steps by which Dick Tinto improved his touch, and corrected, by the rules of art, the luxuriance of a fervid imagination. The scales fell from his eyes on viewing the sketches of a contemporary, the Scottish Teniers, as Wilkie has been deservedly styled. He threw down the brush, took up the crayons, and, amid hunger and toil and suspense and uncertainty, pursued the path of his profession under better auspices than those of his original master. Still the first rude emanations of his genius (like the nursery rhymes of Pope, could these be recovered,) will be dear to the companions of Dick Tinto's youth. There is a tankard and gridiron painted over the door of

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an obscure change-house in the Back-wynd of Gandercleugh—But I feel I must tear myself from the subject, or dwell on it too long.

Amid his wants and struggles, Dick Tinto had recourse, like his brethren, to levying that tax upon the vanity of mankind which he could not extract from their taste and liberality—in a word, he painted portraits. It was in this more advanced state of proficiency, when Dick had soared above his original line of business, and highly disdained any allusion to it, that, after having been estranged for several years, we again met in the village of Gandercleugh, I holding my present situation, and Dick painting copies of the human face divine at a guinea per head. This was a small premium, yet in the first burst of business, it more than sufficed for all Dick's moderate wants; so that he occupied an apartment at the Wallace Inn, cracked his jest with impunity even upon mine host himself, and lived in respect and observance with the chambermaid, hostler, and waiter.

Those halcyon days were too serene to last long. When his honour the Laird of Gandercleugh, with his wife and three daughters, the minister, the gauger, mine esteemed patron Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, and some round dozen of the feuars and farmers, had been consigned to immortality by Tinto's brush, custom began to slacken, and it was impossible to wring more than crowns and half-crowns from the hard hands of the peasants, whose ambition led them to Dick's painting-room.

Still, though the horizon was overclouded, no storm for some time ensued. Mine host had christian faith with a lodger, who had been a good paymaster as long as he had the means. And from a portrait of our landlord himself, grouped with his wife and daughters, in the style of Rubens, which suddenly appeared in the best parlour, it was evident that Dick had found some mode of bartering art for the necessaries of life.

Nothing, however, is more precarious than resources of this nature. It was observed, that Dick became in his turn the whetstone of mine host's wit, without venturing

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either at defence or retaliation ; that his easel was transferred to a garret-room, in which there was scarce space for it to stand upright ; and that he no longer ventured to join the weekly club, of which he had been once the life and soul. In short, Dick Tinto's friends feared that he had acted like the animal called the sloth, which, having eaten up the last green leaf upon the tree where it has established itself, ends by tumbling down from the top, and dying of inanition. I ventured to hint this to Dick, recommended his transferring the exercise of his inestimable talent to some other sphere, and forsaking the common which he might be said to have eaten bare.

" There is an obstacle to my change of residence," said my friend, grasping my hand with a look of solemnity.

" A bill due to my landlord, I am afraid ?" replied I, with heartfelt sympathy ; " if any part of my slender means can assist in this emergence"——

" No, by the soul of Sir Joshua!" answered the generous youth, " I will never involve a friend in the consequences of my own misfortune. There is a mode by which I can regain my liberty ; and to creep even through a common sewer, is better than to remain in prison."

I did not perfectly understand what my friend meant. The muse of painting appeared to have failed him, and what other goddess he could invoke in his distress, was a mystery to me. We parted, however, without further explanation, and I did not again see him until three days after, when he summoned me to partake of the *foy* with which his landlord proposed to regale him ere his departure for Edinburgh.

I found Dick in high spirits, whistling while he buckled the small knapsack, which contained his colours, brushes, pallets, and clean shirt. That he parted on the best terms with mine host, was obvious from the cold beef set forth in the low parlour, flanked by two mugs of admirable brown stout, and I own my curiosity was excited concerning the means through which the face of my friend's affairs had been so suddenly improved. I did not suspect Dick of dealing with the devil, and by what earthly means

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he had extricated himself thus happily, I was at a total loss to conjecture.

He perceived my curiosity, and took me by the hand, "My friend," he said, "fain would I conceal, even from you, the degradation to which it has been necessary to submit, in order to accomplish an honourable retreat from Gandercleugh. But what avails attempting to conceal that, which must needs betray itself even by its superior excellence? All the village—all the parish—all the world—will soon discover to what poverty has reduced Richard Tinto."

A sudden thought here struck me—I had observed that our landlord wore, on that memorable morning, a pair of bran new velveteens, instead of his ancient thicksets.

"What," said I, drawing my right hand, with the forefinger and thumb pressed together, nimbly from my right haunch to my left shoulder, "you have condescended to resume the paternal arts to which you were first bred—long stitches, ha, Dick?"

He repelled this unlucky conjecture with a frown and a pshaw, indicative of indignant contempt, and leading me into another room, showed me, resting against the wall, the majestic head of Sir William Wallace, grim as when severed from the trunk by the orders of the felon Edward.

The painting was executed on boards of a substantial thickness, and the top decorated with irons, for suspending the honoured effigy upon a sign-post.

"There," he said, "my friend, stands the honour of Scotland, and my shame—yet not so—rather the shame of those who, instead of encouraging art in its proper sphere, reduce it to these unbecoming and unworthy extremities."

I endeavoured to smooth the ruffled feelings of my misused and indignant friend. I reminded him, that he ought not, like the stag in the fable, to despise the quality which had extricated him from difficulties, in which his talents, as a portrait or landscape painter, had been found unavailing. Above all, I praised the execution, as well as conception, of his painting, and reminded him, that far

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from feeling dishonoured by so superb a specimen of his talents being exposed to the general view of the public, he ought rather to congratulate himself upon the augmentation of his celebrity, to which its public exhibition must necessarily give rise.

"You are right, my friend—you are right," replied poor Dick, his eye kindling with enthusiasm; "why should I shun the name of an—an—(he hesitated for a phrase)—an out-of-doors artist? Hogarth has introduced himself in that character in one of his best engravings—Domenichino, or some body else, in ancient times—Moreland in our own, have exercised their talents in this manner. And wherefore limit to the rich and higher classes alone the delight which the exhibition of works of art is calculated to inspire into all classes? Statues are placed in the open air, why should Painting be more niggardly in displaying her master-pieces than her sister Sculpture? And yet, my friend, we must part suddenly; the carpenter is coming in an hour to put up the—the emblem; and truly, with all my philosophy, and your consolatory encouragement to boot, I would rather wish to leave Gandercleugh before that operation commences."

We partook of our genial host's parting banquet, and I escorted Dick on his walk to Edinburgh. We parted about a mile from the village, just as we heard the distant cheer of the boys which accompanied the mounting of the new symbol of the Wallace-Head. Dick Tinto mended his pace to get out of hearing,—so little had either early practice or recent philosophy reconciled him to the character of a sign-painter.

In Edinburgh, Dick's talents were discovered and appreciated, and he received dinners and hints from several distinguished judges of the fine arts. But these gentlemen dispensed their criticism more willingly than their cash, and Dick thought he needed cash more than criticism. He therefore sought London, the universal mart of talent, and where, as is usual in general marts of most descriptions, much more of each commodity is exposed to sale than can ever find purchasers.

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Dick, who, in serious earnest, was supposed to have considerable natural talents for his profession, and whose vain and sanguine disposition never permitted him to doubt for a moment of ultimate success, threw himself headlong into the crowd which jostled and struggled for notice and preferment. He elbowed others, and was elbowed himself; and finally, by dint of intrepidity, fought his way into some notice, painted for the prize at the Institution, had pictures at the exhibition at Somerset-house, and damned the hanging committee. But poor Dick was doomed to lose the field he fought so gallantly. In the fine arts, there is scarce an alternative betwixt distinguished success and absolute failure; and as Dick's zeal and industry were unable to ensure the first, he fell into the distresses which, in his condition, were the natural consequences of the latter alternative. He was for a time patronized by one or two of those judicious persons who make a virtue of being singular, and of pitching their own opinions against those of the world in matters of taste and criticism. But they soon tired of poor Tinto, and laid him down as a load, upon the principle on which a spoilt child throws away its plaything. Misery, I fear, took him up, and accompanied him to a premature grave, to which he was carried from an obscure lodging in Swallow-street, where he had been dunned by his landlady within doors, and watched by bailiffs without, until death came to his relief. A corner of the Morning Post noticed his death, generously adding, that his manner displayed considerable genius, though his style was rather sketchy; and referred to an advertisement, which announced that Mr. Varnish, a well-known print-seller, had still on hand a very few drawings and paintings by Richard Tinto, Esquire, which those of the nobility and gentry, who might wish to complete their collections of modern art, were invited to visit without delay. So ended Dick Tinto! a lamentable proof of the great truth, that in the fine arts mediocrity is not permitted, and that he who cannot ascend to the very top of the ladder will do well not to put his foot upon it at all.

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The memory of Tinto is dear to me, from the recollection of the many conversations which we have had together, most of them turning upon my present task. He was delighted with my progress, and talked of an ornamented and illustrated edition, with heads, vignettes, and *culs de lampe*, all to be designed by his own patriotic and friendly pencil. He prevailed upon an old sergeant of invalids to sit to him in the character of Bothwell, the lifeguard's-man of Charles the Second, and the bell-man of Gandercleugh in that of David Deans. But while he thus proposed to unite his own powers with mine for the illustration of these narratives, he mixed many a dose of salutary criticism with the panegyrics which my composition was at times so fortunate as to call forth.

"Your characters," he said, "my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the *gob box;* they *patter* too much—(an elegant phraseology, which Dick had learned while painting the scenes of an itinerant company of players)—there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue."

"The ancient philosopher," said I in reply, "was wont to say, 'Speak, that I may know thee;' and how is it possible for an author to introduce his *personæ dramatis* to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner, than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?"

"It is a false conclusion," said Tinto; "I hate it, Peter, as I hate an unfilled can. I will grant you, indeed, that speech is a faculty of some value in the intercourse of human affairs, and I will not even insist on the doctrine of that Pythagorean toper, who was of opinion, that over a bottle speaking spoiled conversation. But I will not allow that a professor of the fine arts has occasion to embody the idea of his scene in language, in order to impress upon the reader its reality and its effect. On the contrary, I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which

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two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident, accurately drawn, and brought out by appropriate colouring, would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved these everlasting said he's and said she's, with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages."

I replied, "that he confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen; that the serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets, necessarily appealed to the eye, because it had not the organs for addressing the ear; whereas poetry, or that species of composition which approached to it, lay under the necessity of doing absolutely the reverse, and addressed itself to the ear, for the purpose of exciting that interest which it could not attain through the medium of the eye."

Dick was not a whit staggered by my argument, which he contended was founded on misrepresentation. "Description," he said, "was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter; words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene, which he wished to conjure up, as effectually before the mind's eye, as the tablet or canvass presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules," he contended, "applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and laborious mode of composition which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative with that of the drama, a widely different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence; because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and actions of the performers upon the stage. But as nothing," said Dick, "can be more dull than a long narrative written upon the plan of a drama, so where you have approached most near to that species of composition, by indulging in prolonged scenes of mere conversation, the course of your story has become chill and constrained, and you have lost the power of arresting the attention and exciting the imagination, in which upon

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other occasions you may be considered as having succeeded tolerably well."

I made my bow in requital of the compliment, which was probably thrown in by way of *placebo*, and expressed myself willing at least to make one trial of a more straight-forward style of composition, in which my actors should do more, and say less, than in my former attempts of this kind. Dick gave me a patronizing and approving nod, and observed, that, finding me so docile, he would communicate, for the benefit of my muse, a subject which he had studied with a view to his own art.

"The story," he said, "was by tradition, affirmed to be truth, although, as upwards of a hundred years had passed away since the events took place, some doubts upon the accuracy of all the particulars might be reasonably entertained."

When Dick Tinto had thus spoken, he rummaged his port-folio for the sketch from which he proposed one day to execute a picture of fourteen feet by eight. The sketch, which was cleverly executed, to use the appropriate phrase, represented an ancient hall, fitted up and furnished in what we now call the taste of Queen Elizabeth's age. The light, admitted from the upper part of a high casement, fell upon a female figure of exquisite beauty, who, in an attitude of speechless terror, appeared to watch the issue of a debate betwixt two other persons. The one was a young man, in the Vandyke dress common to the time of Charles I., who, with an air of indignant pride, testified by the manner in which he raised his head and extended his arm, seemed to be urging a claim of right, rather than of favour, to a lady, whose age, and some resemblance in their features, pointed her out as the mother of the younger female, and who appeared to listen with a mixture of displeasure and impatience.

Tinto produced his sketch with an air of mysterious triumph, and gazed on it as a fond parent looks upon a hopeful child, while he anticipates the future figure he is to make in the world, and the height to which he will raise the honour of his family. He held it at arms' length

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from me,—he held it closer,—he placed it upon the top of a chest of drawers, closed the lower shutters of the casement, to adjust a downward and favourable light,—fell back to the due distance, dragging me after him,—shaded his face with his hand, as if to exclude all but the favourite object,—and ended by spoiling a child's copy-book, which he rolled up so as to serve for the darkened tube of an amateur. I fancy my expressions of enthusiasm had not been in proportion to his own, for he presently exclaimed with vehemence, "Mr. Pattieson, I used to think you had an eye in your head."

I vindicated my claim to the usual allowance of visual organs.

"Yet, on my honour," said Dick, "I would swear you had been born blind, since you have failed at the first glance to discover the subject and meaning of that sketch. I do not mean to praise my own performance, I leave these arts to others; I am sensible of my deficiencies, conscious that my drawing and colouring may be improved by the time I intend to dedicate to the art. But the conception—the expression—the positions—these tell the story to every one who looks at the sketch; and if I can finish the picture without diminution of the original conception, the name of Tinto shall no more be smothered by the mists of envy and intrigue."

I replied, "That I admired the sketch exceedingly; but that to understand its full merit, I felt it absolutely necessary to be informed of the subject."

"That is the very thing I complain of," answered Tinto; "you have accustomed yourself so much to these creeping twilight details of yours, that you are become incapable of receiving that instant and vivid flash of conviction, which darts on the mind from seeing the happy and expressive combinations of a single scene, and which gathers from the position, attitude, and countenance of the moment, not only the history of the past lives of the personages represented, and the nature of the business on which they are immediately engaged, but lifts even the

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veil of futurity, and affords a shrewd guess at their future fortunes."

"In that case," replied I, "Painting excels the Ape of the renowned Gines de Passamont, which only meddled with the past and the present; nay, she excels that very Nature, who affords her subjects; for I protest to you, Dick, that were I permitted to peep into that Elizabeth-chamber, and see the persons you have sketched conversing in flesh and blood, I should not be a jot nearer guessing the nature of their business, than I am at this moment while looking at your sketch. Only generally, from the languishing look of the young lady, and the care you have taken to present a very handsome leg on the part of the gentleman, I presume there is some reference to a love affair between them."

"Do you really presume to form such a bold conjecture?" said Tinto. "And the indignant earnestness with which you see the man urge his suit—the unresisting and passive despair of the younger female—the stern air of inflexible determination in the elder woman, whose looks express at once consciousness that she is acting wrong, and a firm determination to persist in the course she has adopted"——

"If her looks express all this, my dear Tinto," replied I, interrupting him, "your pencil rivals the dramatic art of Mr. Puff in the Critic, who crammed a whole complicated sentence into the expressive shake of Lord Burleigh's head."

"My good friend, Peter," replied Tinto, "I observe you are perfectly incorrigible; however, I have compassion on your dulness, and am unwilling you should be deprived of the pleasure of understanding my picture, and of gaining, at the same time, a subject for your own pen. You must know then, last summer, while I was taking sketches on the coast of East Lothian and Berwickshire, I was seduced into the mountains of Lammermoor by the account I received of some remains of antiquity in that district. Those with which I was most struck, were the

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ruins of an ancient castle in which that Elizabeth-chamber as you call it, once existed. I resided for two or three days at a farm-house in the neighbourhood, where the aged goodwife was well acquainted with the history of the castle, and the events which had taken place in it. One of these was of a nature so interesting and singular, that my attention was divided between my wish to draw the old ruins in landscape, and to represent in a history-piece the singular events which have taken place in it. Here are my notes of the tale," said poor Dick, handing a parcel of loose scraps, partly scratched over with his pencil, partly with his pen, where outlines of caricatures, sketches of turrets, mills, old gables, and dovecots, disputed the ground with his written memoranda.

I proceeded, however, to decipher the substance of the manuscript as well as I could, and wove it into the following Tale, in which, following in part, though not entirely, my friend Tinto's advice, I endeavoured to render my narrative rather descriptive than dramatic. My favourite propensity, however, has at times overcome me, and my persons, like many others in this talking world, speak now and then a great deal more than they act.

CHAPTER II.

> Well, lords, we have not got that which we have;
> 'Tis not enough our foes are this time fled,
> Being opposites of such repairing nature.
>
> *Second Part of Henry VI.*

In the gorge of a pass or mountain glen, ascending from the fertile plains of East Lothian, there stood in former times an extensive castle, of which only the ruins are now visible. Its ancient proprietors were a race of powerful and warlike barons, who bore the same name with the castle itself, which was Ravenswood. Their line extended to a remote period of antiquity, and they had

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intermarried with the Douglasses, Humes, Swintons, Hays, and other families of power and distinction in the same country. Their history was frequently involved in that of Scotland itself, in whose annals their feats are recorded. The Castle of Ravenswood, occupying, and in some measure commanding, a pass betwixt Berwickshire or the Merse, as the south-eastern province of Scotland is termed, and the Lothians, was of importance both in times of foreign war and domestic discord. It was frequently besieged with ardour and defended with obstinacy, and of course, its owners played a conspicuous part in story. But their house had its revolutions, like all sublunary things; it became greatly declined from its splendour about the middle of the 17th century ; and towards the period of the Revolution, the last proprietor of Ravenswood Castle saw himself compelled to part with the ancient family seat, and to remove himself to a lonely and sea-beaten tower, which, situated on the bleak shores between Saint Abb's Head and the village of Eyemouth, looked out on the lonely and boisterous German Ocean. A black domain of wild pasture-land surrounded their new residence, and formed the remains of their property.

Lord Ravenswood, the heir of this ruined family, was far from bending his mind to his new condition of life. In the civil war of 1689, he had espoused the sinking side, and although he had escaped without the forfeiture of life or land, his blood had been attainted, and his title abolished. He was now called Lord Ravenswood only in courtesy.

This forfeited nobleman inherited the pride and turbulence, though not the fortune of his house, and, as he imputed the final declension of his family to a particular individual, he honoured that person with his full portion of hatred. This was the very man who had now become, by purchase, proprietor of Ravenswood, and the domains of which the heir of the house now stood dispossessed. He was descended of a family much less ancient than that of Lord Ravenswood, and which had only risen to wealth and political importance during the great civil wars. He

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himself had been bred to the bar, and had held high offices in the state, maintaining through life the character of a skilful fisher in the troubled waters of a state divided by factions, and governed by delegated authority; and of one who contrived to amass considerable sums of money in a country where there was but little to be gathered, and who equally knew the value of wealth, and the various means of augmenting it, and using it as an engine of increasing his power and influence.

Thus qualified and gifted, he was a dangerous antagonist to the fierce and imprudent Ravenswood. Whether he had given him good cause for the enmity with which the baron regarded him, was a point on which men spoke differently. Some said the quarrel arose merely from the vindictive spirit and envy of Lord Ravenswood, who could not patiently behold another, though by just and fair purchase, become the proprietor of the estate and castle of his forefathers. But the greater part of the public, prone to slander the wealthy in their absence, as to flatter them in their presence, held a less charitable opinion. They said, that the Lord Keeper, (for to this height Sir William Ashton had ascended,) had, previous to the final purchase of the estate of Ravenswood, been concerned in extensive pecuniary transactions with the former proprietor; and, rather intimating what was probable, than affirming anything positively, they asked which party was likely to have the advantage in stating and enforcing the claims arising out of these complicated affairs, and more than hinted the advantages which the cool lawyer and able politician must necessarily possess over the hot, fiery, and imprudent character, whom he had involved in legal toils, and pecuniary snares.

The character of the times aggravated these suspicions. "In those days there was no king in Israel." Since the departure of James VI. to assume the richer and more powerful crown of England, there had existed in Scotland contending parties, formed among the aristocracy, by whom, as their intrigues at the court of St. James's chanced to prevail, the delegated powers of sovereignty were

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alternately swayed. The evils attending upon this system of government, resembled those which afflict the tenants of an Irish estate, the property of an absentee. There was no supreme power, claiming and possessing a general interest with the community at large, to whom the oppressed might appeal from subordinate tyranny, either for justice or for mercy. Let a monarch be as indolent, as selfish, as much disposed to arbitrary power as he will, still, in a free country, his own interests are so clearly connected with those of the public at large, and the evil consequences to his own authority are so obvious and imminent when a different course is pursued, that common policy, as well as common feeling, point to the equal distribution of justice, and to the establishment of the throne in righteousness. Thus, even sovereigns, remarkable for usurpation and tyranny, have been found rigorous in the administration of justice among their subjects, in cases where their own power and passions were not compromised.

It is very different when the powers of sovereignty are delegated to the head of an aristocratic faction, rivalled and pressed closely in the race of ambition by an adverse leader. His brief and precarious enjoyment of power must be employed in rewarding his partizans, in extending his influence, in oppressing and crushing his adversaries. Even Abon Hassan, the most disinterested of all viceroys, forgot not, during his caliphate of one day, to send a douceur of one thousand pieces of gold to his own household; and the Scottish vicegerents, raised to power by the strength of their faction, failed not to embrace the same means of rewarding them.

The administration of justice, in particular, was infected by the most gross partiality. A case of importance scarcely occurred, in which there was not some ground for bias or partiality on the part of the judges, who were so little able to withstand the temptation, that the adage, "Show me the man, and I will show you the law," became as prevalent as it was scandalous. One corruption led the way to others still more gross and profligate. The

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judge who lent his sacred authority in one case to support a friend, and in another to crush an enemy, and whose decisions were founded on family connexions or political relations, could not be supposed inaccessible to direct personal motives; and the purse of the wealthy was too often believed to be thrown into the scale to weigh down the cause of the poor litigant. The subordinate officers of the law affected little scruple concerning bribery. Pieces of plate, and bags of money, were sent in presents to the king's counsel, to influence their conduct, and poured forth, says a contemporary writer, like billets of wood upon their floors, without even the decency of concealment.

In such times, it was not over uncharitable to suppose, that the statesman, practised in courts of law, and a powerful member of a triumphant cabal, might find and use means of advantage over his less skilful and less favoured adversary; and if it had been supposed that Sir William Ashton's conscience had been too delicate to profit by these advantages, it was believed that his ambition and desire of extending his wealth and consequence, found as strong a stimulus in the exhortations of his lady, as the daring aim of Macbeth in the days of yore.

Lady Ashton was of a family more distinguished than that of her lord, an advantage which she did not fail to use to the uttermost, in maintaining and extending her husband's influence over others, and, unless she was greatly belied, her own over him. She had been beautiful, and was stately and majestic in her appearance. Endowed by nature with strong powers and violent passions, experience had taught her to employ the one, and to conceal, if not to moderate, the other. She was a severe and strict observer of the external forms, at least, of devotion; her hospitality was splendid even to ostentation; her address and manners, agreeable to the pattern most valued in Scotland at the period, were grave, dignified, and severely regulated by the rules of etiquette. Her character had always been beyond the breath of slander. And yet, with all these qualities to excite respect, Lady Ashton was seldom mentioned in the terms of

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love or affection. Interest,—the interest of her family, if not her own,—seemed too obviously the motive of her actions; and where this is the case, the sharp-judging and malignant public are not easily imposed upon by outward show. It was seen and ascertained, that, in her most graceful courtesies and compliments, Lady Ashton no more lost sight of her object than the falcon in his airy wheel turns his quick eyes from his destined quarry; and hence, something of doubt and suspicion qualified the feelings with which her equals received her attentions. With her inferiors these feelings were mingled with fear, an impression useful to her purposes, so far as it enforced ready compliance with her requests, and implicit obedience to her commands, but detrimental, because it cannot exist with affection or regard.

Even her husband, it is said, upon whose fortunes her talents and address had produced such emphatic influence, regarded her with respectful awe rather than confiding attachment; and report said, there were times when he considered his grandeur as dearly purchased at the expense of domestic thraldom. Of this, however, much might be suspected, but little could be accurately known; Lady Ashton regarded the honour of her husband as her own, and was well aware how much that would suffer in the public eye should he appear a vassal to his wife. In all her arguments, his opinion was quoted as infallible; his taste was appealed to, and his sentiments received, with the air of deference which a dutiful wife might seem to owe to a husband of Sir William Ashton's rank and character. But there was something under all this which rung false and hollow; and to those who watched this couple with close, and perhaps malicious scrutiny, it seemed evident, that, in the haughtiness of a firmer character higher birth, and more decided views of aggrandizement, the lady looked with some contempt on her husband, and that he regarded her with jealous fear, rather than with love or admiration.

Still, however, the leading and favourite interests of Sir William Ashton and his lady were the same, and they

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failed not to work in concert, although without cordiality, and to testify, in all exterior circumstances, that respect for each other, which they were aware was necessary to secure that of the public.

Their union was crowned with several children, of whom three survived. One, the eldest son, was absent on his travels; the second, a girl of seventeen, and the third, a boy about three years younger, resided with their parents in Edinburgh, during the sessions of the Scottish Parliament and Privy-council, at other times in the old Gothic castle of Ravenswood, to which the Lord Keeper, had made large additions in the style of the seventeenth century.

Allan Lord Ravenswood, the late proprietor of that ancient mansion and the large estate annexed to it, continued for some time to wage ineffectual war with his successor concerning various points to which their former transactions had given rise, and which were successively determined in favour of the wealthy and powerful competitor until death closed the litigation, by summoning Ravenswood to a higher bar. The thread of life, which had been long wasting, gave way during a fit of violent and impotent fury, with which he was assailed on receiving the news of the loss of a cause, founded, perhaps, rather in equity than in law, the last which he had maintained against his powerful antagonist. His son witnessed his dying agonies, and heard the curses which he breathed against his adversary, as if they had conveyed to him a legacy of vengeance. Other circumstances happened to exasperate a passion, which was, and had long been, a prevalent vice in the Scottish disposition.

It was a November morning, and the cliffs which overlooked the ocean were hung with thick and heavy mist, when the portals of the ancient and half-ruinous tower, in which Lord Ravenswood had spent the last and troubled years of his life, opened, that his mortal remains might pass forward to an abode yet more dreary and lonely. The pomp of attendance, to which the deceased had, in

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his latter years, been a stranger, was revived as he was about to be consigned to the realms of forgetfulness.

Banner after banner, with the various devices and coats of this ancient family and its connexions, followed each other in mournful procession from under the low-browed archway of the court-yard. The principal gentry of the country attended in the deepest mourning, and tempered the pace of their long train of horses to the solemn march befitting the occasion. Trumpets, with banners of crape attached to them, sent forth their long and melancholy notes to regulate the movements of the procession. An immense train of inferior mourners and menials closed the rear, which had not yet issued from the castle-gate, when the van had reached the chapel where the body was to be deposited.

Contrary to the custom, and even to the law of the time, the body was met by a priest of the Scottish Episcopal communion, arrayed in his surplice, and prepared to read over the coffin of the deceased the funeral service of the church. Such had been the desire of Lord Ravenswood in his last illness, and it was readily complied with by the tory gentlemen, or cavaliers, as they affected to style themselves, in which faction most of his kinsmen were enrolled. The presbyterian church-judicatory of the bounds, considering the ceremony as a bravading insult upon their authority, had applied to the Lord Keeper, as the nearest privy-counsellor, for a warrant to prevent its being carried into effect; so that, when the clergyman had opened his prayer-book, an officer of the law, supported by some armed men, commanded him to be silent. An insult, which fired the whole assembly with indignation, was particularly and instantly resented by the only son of the deceased, Edgar, popularly called the Master of Ravenswood, a youth of about twenty years of age. He clapped his hand on his sword, and, bidding the official person to desist at his peril from further interruption, commanded the clergyman to proceed. The man attempted to enforce his commission, but as an hundred swords at once glitter-

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ed in the air, he contented himself with protesting against the violence which had been offered to him in the execution of his duty, and stood aloof, a sullen and moody spectator of the ceremonial, muttering as one who should say, "You'll rue the day that clogs me with this answer."

The scene was worthy of an artist's pencil. Under the very arch of the house of death, the clergyman, affrighted at the scene, and trembling for his own safety, hastily, and unwillingly rehearsed the solemn service of the church, and spoke dust to dust, and ashes to ashes, over ruined pride and decayed prosperity. Around stood the relations of the deceased, their countenances more in anger than in sorrow, and the drawn swords which they brandished forming a violent contrast with their deep mourning habits. In the countenance of the young man alone, resentment seemed for the moment overpowered by the deep agony with which he beheld his nearest, and almost his only friend, consigned to the tomb of his ancestry. A relative observed him turn deadly pale, when, all rites being now duly observed, it became the duty of the chief mourner to lower down into the charnel vault, where mouldering coffins showed their tattered velvet and decayed plating, the head of the corpse which was to be their partner in corruption. He stept to the youth and offered his assistance, which, by a mute motion, Edgar Ravenswood rejected. Firmly, and without a tear, he performed that last duty. The stone was laid on the sepulchre, the door of the aisle was locked, and the youth took possession of its massive key.

As the crowd left the chapel, he paused on the steps which led to its Gothic chancel. "Gentlemen and friends," he said, "you have this day done no common duty to the body of your deceased kinsman. The rites of due observance, which, in other countries, are allowed as the due of the meanest Christian, would this day have been denied to the body of your relative—not certainly sprung of the meanest house in Scotland—had it not been assured to him by your courage. Others bury their dead in sorrow and tears, in silence and in reverence; our

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funeral rites are marred by the intrusion of bailiffs and ruffians, and our grief—the grief due to our departed friend—is chased from our cheeks by the glow of just indignation. But it is well that I know from what quiver this arrow has come forth. It was only he that dug the grave who could have the mean cruelty to disturb the obsequies; and Heaven do as much to me and more, if I requite not to this man and his house the ruin and disgrace he has brought on me and mine!"

A numerous part of the assembly applauded this speech, as the spirited expression of just resentment; but the more cool and judicious regretted that it had been uttered. The fortunes of the heir of Ravenswood were too low to brave the farther hostility which they imagined these open expressions of resentment must necessarily provoke. Their apprehensions, however, proved groundless, at least in the immediate consequences of this affair.

The mourners returned to the tower, there, according to a custom but recently abolished in Scotland, to carouse deep healths to the memory of the deceased, to make the house of sorrow ring with sounds of joviality and debauch, and to diminish, by the expense of a large and profuse entertainment, the limited revenues of the heir of him whose funeral they thus strangely honoured. It was the custom, however, and on the present occasion it was fully observed. The tables swam in wine, the populace feasted in the court-yard, the yeomen in the kitchen and buttery, and two years' rent of Ravenswood's remaining property hardly defrayed the charge of the funeral revel. The wine did its office on all but the Master of Ravenswood, a title which he still retained, though forfeiture had attached to that of his father. He, while passing around the cup which he himself did not taste, soon listened to a thousand exclamations against the Lord Keeper, and passionate protestations of attachment to himself, and to the honour of his house. He listened with dark and sullen brow to ebullitions which he considered justly as equally evanescent with the crimson bubbles on the brink of the

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goblet, or at least with the vapours which its contents excited in the brains of the revellers around him.

When the last flask was emptied, they took their leave, with deep protestations—to be forgotten on the morrow, if, indeed, those who made them should not think it necessary for their safety to make a more solemn retractation.

Accepting their adieus with an air of contempt which he could scarce conceal, Ravenswood at length beheld his ruinous habitation cleared of this confluence of riotous guests, and returned to the deserted hall, which now appeared doubly lonely, from the cessation of that clamour to which it had so lately echoed. But its space was peopled by phantoms, which the imagination of the young heir conjured up before him—the tarnished honour and degraded fortunes of his house, the destruction of his own hopes, and the triumph of that family by whom they had been ruined. To a mind naturally of a gloomy cast, here was ample room for meditation, and the musings of young Ravenswood were deep and unwitnessed.

The peasant, who shows the ruins of the tower, which still crown the beetling cliff and behold the war of the waves, though no more tenanted save by the sea-mew and cormorant, even yet affirms, that on this fatal night the Master of Ravenswood, by the bitter exclamations of his despair, evoked some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven. Alas! what fiend can suggest more desperate counsels, than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?

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CHAPTER III.

Over Gods forebode, then, said the King,
That thou shouldst shoot at me.
William Bell, Clim o' the Clough, &c.

On the morning after the funeral, the legal officer, whose authority had been found insufficient to effect an interruption of the funeral solemnities of the late Lord Ravenswood, hastened to state before the Keeper the resistance which he had met with in the execution of his office.

The statesman was seated in a spacious library, once a banquetting-room in the old Castle of Ravenswood, as was evident from the armorial insignia still displayed on the carved roof, which was vaulted with Spanish chesnut, and on the stained glass of the casement, through which gleamed a dim yet rich light, on the long rows of shelves, bending under the weight of legal commentators and monkish historians, whose ponderous volumes formed the chief and most valued contents of a Scottish historian of the period. On the massive oaken table and reading-desk, lay a confused mass of letters, petitions, and parchments; to toil amongst which was the pleasure at once and the plague of Sir William Ashton's life. His appearance was grave and even noble, well becoming one who held a high office in the state; and it was not, save after long and intimate conversation with him upon topics of pressing and personal interest, that a stranger could have discovered something vacillating and uncertain in his resolutions; an infirmity of purpose, arising from a cautious and timid disposition, which, as he was conscious of its internal influence on his mind, he was, from pride as well as policy, most anxious to conceal from others.

He listened with great apparent composure to an exaggerated account of the tumult which had taken place

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at the funeral, of the contempt thrown on his own authority, and that of the church and state; nor did he seem moved even by the faithful report of the insulting and threatening language which had been uttered by young Ravenswood and others, and obviously directed against himself. He heard, also, what the man had been able to collect, in a very distorted and aggravated shape, of the toasts which had been drunk, and the menaces uttered at the subsequent entertainment. In fine, he made careful notes of all these particulars, and of the names of the persons by whom, in case of need, an accusation, founded upon these violent proceedings, could be witnessed and made good, and dismissed his informer, secure that he was now master of the remaining fortune, and even of the personal liberty, of young Ravenswood.

When the door had closed upon the officer of the law, the Lord Keeper remained for a moment in deep meditation; then, starting from his seat, paced the apartment as one about to take a sudden and energetic resolution. "Young Ravenswood," he muttered, "is now mine—he is my own—he has placed himself in my hand, and he shall bend or break. I have not forgot the determined and dogged obstinacy with which his father fought every point to the last, resisted every effort at compromise, embroiled me in law-suits, and attempted to assail my character when he could not otherwise impugn my rights. This boy he has left behind him—this Edgar—this hot-headed, hair-brained fool, has wrecked his vessel before she has cleared the harbour. I must see that he gains no advantage of some turning tide which may again float him off. These memoranda, properly stated to the Privy Council, cannot but be construed into an aggravated riot, in which the dignity both of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities stand committed. A heavy fine might be imposed; an order for committing him to Edinburgh or Blackness Castle seems not improper; even a charge of treason might be laid on many of these words and expressions, though God forbid I should prosecute the matter to that extent. No, I will not;—I will not touch his

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life, even if it should be in my power ;—and yet, if he lives till a change of times, what follows ?—Restitution—perhaps revenge. I know Athole promised his interest to old Ravenswood, and here is his son already bandying and making a faction by his own contemptible influence. What a ready tool he would be for the use of those who are watching the downfall of our administration !"

While these thoughts were agitating the mind of the wily statesman, and while he was persuading himself that his own interest and safety, as well as those of his friends and party, depended on using the present advantage to the uttermost against young Ravenswood, the Lord Keeper sat down to his desk, and proceeded to draw up, for the information of the Privy Council, an account of the disorderly proceedings which, in contempt of his warrant, had taken place at the funeral of Lord Ravenswood The names of most of the parties concerned, as well as the fact itself, would, he was well aware, sound odiously in the ears of his colleagues in administration, and most likely instigate them to make an example of young Ravenswood at least, *in terrorem*.

It was a point of delicacy, however, to select such expressions as might infer the young man's culpability, without seeming directly to urge it, which, on the part of Sir William Ashton, his father's ancient antagonist, could not but appear odious and invidious. While he was in the act of composition, labouring to find words which might indicate Edgar Ravenswood to be the cause of the uproar, without specifically making such a charge, Sir William, in a pause of his task, chanced, in looking upward, to see the crest of the family (for whose heir he was whetting the arrows, and disposing the toils of the law,) carved upon one of the corbeilles from which the vaulted roof of the apartment sprung. It was a black bull's head, with the legend, " I bide my time ;" and the occasion upon which it was adopted mingled itself singularly and impressively with the subject of his present reflections.

It was said by a constant tradition, that a Malisius de Ravenswood had, in the thirteenth century, been depriv-

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ed of his castle and lands by a powerful usurper, who had for a while enjoyed his spoils in quiet. At length, on the eve of a costly banquet, Ravenswood, who had watched his opportunity, introduced himself into the castle with a small band of faithful retainers. The serving of the expected feast was impatiently looked for by the guests, and clamorously demanded by the temporary master of the castle. Ravenswood, who had assumed the disguise of a sewer upon the occasion, answered, in a stern voice, " I bide my time ;" and at the same moment a bull's head, the ancient symbol of death, was placed upon the table. The explosion of the conspiracy took place upon the signal, and the usurper and his followers were put to death. Perhaps there was something in this still known and often repeated story, which came immediately home to the breast and conscience of the Lord Keeper ; for, putting from him the paper on which he had begun his report, and carefully locking the memoranda which he had prepared, into a cabinet which stood beside him, he proceeded to walk abroad, as if for the purpose of collecting his ideas, and reflecting farther on the consequences of the step which he was about to take, ere yet they became inevitable.

In passing through a large Gothic anteroom, Sir William Ashton heard the sound of his daughter's lute. Music, when the performers are concealed, affects us with a pleasure mingled with surprise, and reminds us of the natural concert of birds among the leafy bowers. The statesman, though little accustomed to give way to emotions of this natural and simple class, was still a man and a father. He stopped, therefore, and listened, while the silver tones of Lucy Ashton's voice mingled with the accompaniment in an ancient air, to which some one had adapted the following words :—

" Look not thou on beauty's charming,—
Sit thou still when kings are arming,—
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,—
Speak not when the people listens,—
Stop thine ear against the singer,—

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From the red gold keep thy finger.—
Vacant heart, and hand and eye,—
Easy live and quiet die."

The sounds ceased, and the Keeper entered his daughter's apartment.

The words she had chosen seemed particularly adapted to her character; for Lucy Ashton's exquisitely beautiful, yet somewhat girlish features, were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly pleasure. Her locks, which were of shadowy gold, divided on a brow of exquisite whiteness, like a gleam of broken and pallid sunshine upon a hill of snow. The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid, and feminine, and seemed rather to shrink from the most casual look of a stranger, than to court his admiration. Something there was of a Madonna cast, perhaps the result of delicate health, and of residence in a family, where the dispositions of the inmates were fiercer, more active, and energetic, than her own.

Yet her passiveness of disposition was by no means owing to an indifferent or unfeeling mind. Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aërial palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive, though delightful architecture. In her retired chamber, or in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and called after her name, she was in fancy distributing the prizes at the tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants; or she was wandering in the wilderness with Una, under escort of the generous lion; or she was identifying herself with the simple, yet noble-minded Miranda, in the isle of wonder and enchantment.

But in her exterior relations to things of this world,

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Lucy willingly received the ruling impulse from those around her. The alternative was, in general, too indifferent to her to render resistance desirable, and she willingly found a motive for decision in the opinion of her friends, which perhaps she might have sought for in vain in her own choice. Every reader must have observed in some family of his acquaintance, some individual of a temper soft and yielding, who, mixed with stronger and more ardent minds, is borne along by the will of others, with as little power of opposition as the flower which is flung into a running stream. It usually happens that such a compliant and easy disposition, which resigns itself without murmur to the guidance of others, becomes the darling of those to whose inclinations its own seem to be offered, in ungrudging and ready sacrifice.

This was eminently the case with Lucy Ashton. Her politic, wary, and worldly father, felt for her an affection, the strength of which sometimes surprised him into an unusual emotion. Her elder brother, who trode the path of ambition with a haughtier step than his father, had also more of human affection. A soldier, and in a dissolute age, he preferred his sister Lucy even to pleasure, and to military preferment and distinction. Her younger brother, at an age when trifles chiefly occupied his mind, made her the confidant of all his pleasures and anxieties, his success in field-sports, and his quarrels with his tutor and instructers. To these details, however trivial, Lucy lent patient and not indifferent attention. They moved and interested Henry, and that was enough to secure her ear.

Her mother alone did not feel that distinguished and predominating affection, with which the rest of the family cherished Lucy. She regarded what she termed her daughter's want of spirit, as a decided mark, that the more plebeian blood of her father predominated in Lucy's veins, and used to call her in derision her Lammermoor Shepherdess. To dislike so gentle and inoffensive a being was impossible; but Lady Ashton preferred her eldest son, on whom had descended a large portion of her own ambitious and undaunted disposition, to a daugh-

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ter whose softness of temper seemed allied to feebleness of mind. Her eldest son was the more partially beloved by his mother, because, contrary to the usual custom of Scottish families of distinction, he had been named after the head of the house.

"My Sholto," she said, "will support the untarnished honour of his maternal house, and elevate and support that of his father. Poor Lucy is unfit for courts, or crowded halls. Some country laird must be her husband, rich enough to supply her with every comfort, without an effort on her own part, so that she may have nothing to shed a tear for but the tender apprehension lest he may break his neck in a fox-chase. It was not so, however, that our house was raised, nor is it so that it can be fortified and augmented. The Lord Keeper's dignity is yet new; it must be borne as if we were used to its weight, worthy of it, and prompt to assert and maintain it. Before ancient authorities, men bend from customary and hereditary deference; in our presence, they will stand erect, unless they are compelled to prostrate themselves. A daughter fit for the sheep-fold, or the cloister, is ill qualified to exact respect where it is yielded with reluctance; and since Heaven refused us a third boy, Lucy should have held a character fit to supply his place. The hour will be a happy one which disposes her hand in marriage to some one whose energy is greater than her own, or whose ambition is of as low an order."

So meditated a mother, to whom the qualities of her children's hearts, as well as the prospect of their domestic happiness, seemed light in comparison to their rank and temporal greatness. But, like many a parent of hot and impatient character, she was mistaken in estimating the feelings of her daughter, who, under a semblance of extreme indifference, nourished the germ of those passions which sometimes spring up in one night, like the gourd of the prophet, and astonish the observer by their unexpected ardour and intensity. In fact, Lucy's sentiments seemed chill, because nothing had occurred to interest or awaken them. Her life had hitherto flowed on

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in an uniform and gentle tenor, and happy for her had not its present smoothness of current resembled that of the stream as it glides downwards to the waterfall!

"So, Lucy," said her father, entering as her song was ended, "does your musical philosopher teach you to contemn the world before you know it?—that is surely something premature. Or did you but speak according to the fashion of fair maidens, who are always to hold the pleasures of life in contempt till they are pressed upon them by the address of some gentle knight?"

Lucy blushed, disclaimed any inference respecting her own choice being drawn from her selection of a song, and readily laid aside her instrument at her father's request that she would attend him in his walk.

A large and well-wooded park, or rather chase, stretched along the hill behind the castle, which occupying, as we have noticed, a pass ascending from the plain, seemed built in its very gorge to defend the forest ground which arose behind it in shaggy majesty. Into this romantic region the father and daughter proceeded, arm in arm, by a noble avenue overarched by embowering elms, beneath which groups of the fallow-deer were seen to stray in distant perspective. As they paced slowly on, admiring the different points of view, for which Sir William Ashton, notwithstanding the nature of his usual avocations, had considerable taste and feeling, they were overtaken by the forester, or park-keeper, who, intent on sylvan sport, was proceeding with his cross-bow over his arm, and a hound led in leash by his boy, into the interior of the wood.

"Going to shoot us a piece of venison, Norman?" said his master, as he returned the woodman's salutation.

"Saul, your honour, and that I am. Will it please you to see the sport?"

"O no," said his lordship, after looking at his daughter, whose colour fled at the idea of seeing the deer shot, although had her father expressed his wish that they should accompany Norman, it was probable she would not even have hinted her reluctance.

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The forester shrugged his shoulders. "It was a disheartening thing," he said, "when none of the gentles came down to see the sport. He hoped Captain Sholto would be soon hame, or he might shut up his shop entirely; for Mr. Harry was kept sae close wi' his Latin nonsense, that, though his will was very gude to be in the wood from morning till night, there would be a hopeful lad lost, and no making a man of him. It was not so, he had heard, in Lord Ravenswood's time—when a buck was to be killed, man and mother's son ran to see; and when the deer fell, the knife was always presented to the knight, and he never gave less than a dollar for the compliment. And there was Edgar Ravenswood—Master of Ravenswood that is now—when he goes up to the wood—there hasna been a better hunter since Tristrem's time—when Sir Edgar hauds out,[1] down goes the deer, faith. But we hae lost a' sense of wood-craft on this side of the hill."

There was much in this harangue highly displeasing to the Lord Keeper's feelings; he could not help observing that his menial despised him almost avowedly for not possessing that taste for sport, which in those times was deemed the natural and indispensable attribute of a real gentleman. But the master of the game is, in all country houses, a man of great importance, and entitled to use considerable freedom of speech. Sir William, therefore only smiled and replied, he had something else to think upon to-day than killing deer; meantime, taking out his purse, he gave the ranger a dollar for his encouragement. The fellow received it as the waiter of a fashionable hotel receives double his proper fee from the hands of a country gentleman,—that is, with a smile, in which pleasure at the gift is mingled with contempt for the ignorance of the donor. "Your honour is the bad paymaster," he said, "who pays before it is done. What would you do were I to miss the buck after you have paid me my wood-fee?"

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"I suppose," said the Keeper, smiling, "you would hardly guess what I mean were I to tell you of a *condictio indebiti?*"

"Not I, on my saul—I guess it is some law phrase—but sue a beggar, and—your honour knows what follows. —Well, but I will be just with you, and if bow and brach fail not, you shall have a piece of game two fingers fat on the brisket."

As he was about to go off, his master again called him, and asked, as if by accident, whether the Master of Ravenswood was actually so brave a man and so good a shooter as the world spoke him?

"Brave!—brave enough, I warrant you," answered Norman; "I was in the wood at Tyninghame, when there was a sort of gallants hunting with my lord; on my saul, there was a buck turned to bay made us all stand back; a stout old Trojan of the first-head, ten-tynd branches, and a brow as broad as e'er a bullock's. Egad, he dashed at the old lord, and there would have been inlake among the peerage, if the Master had not whipt roundly in, and hamstrung him with his cutlass. He was but sixteen then, bless his heart!"

"And is he as ready with the gun as with the couteau?" said Sir William.

"He'll strike this silver dollar out from between my finger and thumb at fourscore yards, and I'll hold it out for a gold merk; what more would ye have of eye, hand, lead, and gunpowder?"

"O no more to be wished, certainly," said the Lord Keeper; "but we keep you from your sport, Norman. Good morrow, good Norman."

And humming his rustic roundelay, the yeoman went on his road, the sound of his rough voice gradually dying away as the distance betwixt them increased:—

The Monk must arise when the matins ring,
The Abbot may sleep to their chime;
But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing
'Tis time, my hearts, 'tis time.

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There's bucks and raes on Bilhope braes,
There's a herd on Shortwood Shaw;
But a lily-white doe in the garden goes,
She's fairly worth them a'.

"Has this fellow," said the Lord Keeper, when the yeoman's song had died on the wind, "ever served the Ravenswood people, that he seems so much interested in them? I suppose you know, Lucy, for you make it a point of conscience to record the special history of every boor about the castle."

"I am not quite so faithful a chronicler, my dear father; but I believe that Norman once served here while a boy, and before he went to Ledington, whence you hired him. But if you want to know anything of the former family, Old Alice is the best authority."

"And what should I have to do with them, pray, Lucy," said her father, "or with their history or accomplishments?"

"Nay, I do not know, sir; only that you were asking questions of Norman about young Ravenswood."

"Pshaw, child!"—replied her father, yet immediately added, "And who is old Alice? I think you know all the old women in the country."

"To be sure I do, or how could I help the old creatures when they are in hard times? And as to old Alice, she is the very empress of old women, and queen of gossips, so far as legendary lore is concerned. She is blind, poor old soul, but when she speaks to you, you would think she has some way of looking into your very heart. I am sure I often cover my face, or turn it away, for it seems as if she saw one change colour, though she has been blind these twenty years. She is worth visiting, were it but to say you have seen a blind and paralytic old woman have so much acuteness of perception, and dignity of manners. I assure you, she might be a countess from her language and behaviour.—Come, you must go to see Alice; we are not a quarter of a mile from her cottage."

"All this, my dear," said the Lord Keeper, "is no

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answer to my question, who this woman is, and what is her connection with the former proprietor's family ?"

"O, it was something of a nourice-ship, I believe ; and she remained here, because her two grandsons were engaged in your service. But it was against her will, I fancy ; for the poor old creature is always regretting the change of times and of property."

"I am much obliged to her," answered the Lord Keeper. "She and her folk eat my bread and drink my cup, and are lamenting all the while that they are not still under a family which never could do good, either to themselves or any one else !"

"Indeed," replied Lucy, "I am certain you do old Alice injustice. She has nothing mercenary about her, and would not accept a penny in charity, if it were to save her from being starved. She is only talkative, like all old folk, when you put them upon stories of their youth ; and she speaks about the Ravenswood people, because she lived under them so many years. But I am sure she is grateful to you, sir, for your protection, and that she would rather speak to you, than to any other person in the whole world beside. Do, sir, come and see old Alice."

And with the freedom of an indulged daughter, she dragged the Lord Keeper in the direction she desired.

CHAPTER IV.

Through tops of the high trees she did descry
A little smoke, whose vapour, thin, and light,
Reeking aloft, uprolled to the sky,
Which cheerful sign did send unto her sight,
That in the same did wonne some living wight.
Spenser.

Lucy acted as her father's guide, for he was too much engrossed with his political labours, or with society, to be

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perfectly acquainted with his own extensive domains, and, moreover, was generally an inhabitant of the city of Edinburgh ; and she, on the other hand, had, with her mother, resided the whole summer in Ravenswood, and, partly from taste, partly from want of any other amusement, had, by her frequent rambles, learned to know each lane, alley, dingle, or bushy dell,

"And every bosky bourne from side to side."

We have said that the Lord Keeper was not indifferent to the beauties of nature, and we add, in justice to him, that he felt them doubly, when pointed out by the beautiful, simple, and interesting girl, who, hanging on his arm with filial kindness, now called him to admire the size of some ancient oak, and now the unexpected turn, where the path developing its maze from glen or dingle, suddenly reached an eminence commanding an extensive view of the plains beneath them, and then gradually glided away from the prospect to lose itself among rocks and thickets, and guide to scenes of deeper seclusion.

It was when pausing on one of those points of extensive and commanding view, that Lucy told her father they were close by the cottage of her blind protegée ; and on turning from the little hill, a path which led around it, worn by the daily steps of the infirm inmate, brought them in sight of the hut, which, embosomed in a deep and obscure dell, seemed to have been so situated purposely to bear a correspondence with the darkened state of its inhabitant.

The cottage was situated immediately under a tall rock, which in some measure beetled over it, as if threatening to drop some detached fragment from its brow on the frail tenement beneath. The hut itself was constructed of turf and stones, and rudely roofed over with thatch, much of which was in a dilapidated condition. The thin blue smoke rose from it in a light column, and curled upward along the white face of the incumbent rock, giving the scene a tint of exquisite softness. In a small and

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rude garden, surrounded by straggling elder-bushes, which formed a sort of imperfect hedge, sat near to the bee-hives, by the produce of which she lived, that "woman old," whom Lucy had brought her father hither to visit.

Whatever there had been which was disastrous in her fortune—whatever there was miserable in her dwelling, it was easy to judge, by the first glance, that neither years, poverty, misfortune, nor infirmity, had broken the spirit of this remarkable woman.

She occupied a turf-seat, placed under a weeping birch of unusual magnitude and age, as Judah is represented sitting under her palm-tree, with an air at once of majesty and of dejection. Her figure was tall, commanding, and but little bent by the infirmities of old age. Her dress, though that of a peasant, was uncommonly clean, forming in that particular a strong contrast to most of her rank, and was disposed with an attention to neatness and even to taste, equally unusual. But it was her expression of countenance which chiefly struck the spectator, and induced most persons to address her with a degree of deference and civility very inconsistent with the miserable state of her dwelling; and which, nevertheless, she received with that easy composure, which showed she felt it to be her due. She had once been beautiful, but her beauty had been of a bold and masculine cast, such as does not survive the bloom of youth; yet her features continued to express strong sense, deep reflection, and a character of sober pride, which, as we have already said of her dress, appeared to argue a conscious superiority to those of her own rank. It scarce seemed possible that a face deprived of the advantage of sight, could have expressed character so strongly; but her eyes, which were almost totally closed, did not by the display of their sightless orbs, mar the countenance to which they could add nothing. She seemed in a ruminating posture, soothed, perhaps, by the murmurs of the busy tribe around her, to abstraction, though not to slumber.

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Lucy undid the latch of the little garden gate, and solicited the old woman's attention. "My father, Alice, is come to see you."

"He is welcome, Miss Ashton, and so are you," said the old woman, turning and inclining her head towards her visiters.

"This is a fine morning for your bee-hives, mother," said the Lord Keeper, who, struck with the outward appearance of Alice, was somewhat curious to know if her conversation would correspond with it.

"I believe so, my lord," she replied; "I feel the air breathe milder than of late."

"You do not," resumed the statesman, "take charge of these bees yourself, mother?—How do you manage them?"

"By delegates, as kings do their subjects," resumed Alice, "and I am fortunate in a prime minister—Here, Babie."

She whistled on a small silver call which hung around her neck, and which at that time was sometimes used to summon domestics, and Babie, a girl of fifteen, made her appearance from the hut, not altogether so cleanly arrayed as she would probably have been had Alice had the use of her eyes, but with a greater air of neatness than was upon the whole to have been expected.

"Babie," said her mistress, "offer some bread and honey to the Lord Keeper and Miss Ashton—they will excuse your awkwardness, if you use cleanliness and despatch."

Babie performed her mistress's command with the grace which was naturally to have been expected, moving to and fro with a lobster-like gesture, her feet and legs tending one-way, while her head, turned in a different direction, was fixed in wonder upon the laird, who was more frequently heard of than seen by his tenants and dependants. The bread and honey, however, deposited on a plantain leaf, was offered and accepted in all due courtesy. The Lord Keeper, still retaining the place which he had occupied on the decayed trunk of a fallen

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tree, looked as if he wished to prolong the interview, but was at a loss how to introduce a suitable subject.

"You have been long a resident on this property?" he said, after a pause.

"It is now nearly sixty years since I first knew Ravenswood," answered the old dame, whose conversation, though perfectly civil and respectful, seemed cautiously limited to the unavoidable and necessary task of replying to Sir William.

"You are not, I should judge by your accent, of this country originally?" said the Lord Keeper in continuation.

"No; I am by birth an Englishwoman."

"Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own."

"It is here," replied the blind woman, "that I have drank the cup of joy and of sorrow which Heaven destined for me. I was here the wife of an upright and affectionate husband for more than twenty years—I was here the mother of six promising children—it was here that God deprived me of all these blessings—it was here they died, and yonder, by yon ruined chapel, they lie all buried—I had no country but theirs while they lived—I have none but theirs now they are no more."

"But your house," said the Lord Keeper, looking at it, "is miserably ruinous?"

"Do, my dear father," said Lucy, eagerly, yet bashfully, catching at the hint, "give orders to make it better, —that is, if you think it proper."

"It will last my time, my dear Miss Lucy," said the blind woman; "I would not have my lord give himself the least trouble about it."

"But," said Lucy, "you once had a much better house, and were rich, and now in your old age to live in this hovel!"

"It is as good as I deserve, Miss Lucy; if my heart has not broke with what I have suffered, and seen others suffer, it must have been strong enough, and the rest of this old frame has no right to call itself weaker."

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"You have probably witnessed many changes," said the Lord Keeper; "but your experience must have taught you to expect them."

"It has taught me to endure them, my lord," was the reply.

"Yet you knew that they must needs arrive in the course of years?" said the statesman.

"Ay; as I know that the stump, on or beside which you sit, once a tall and lofty tree, must needs one day fall by decay or by the axe; yet I hoped my eyes might not witness the downfall of the tree which overshadowed my dwelling."

"Do not suppose," said the Lord Keeper, "that you will lose any interest with me, for looking back with regret to the days when another family possessed my estates. You had reason, doubtless, to love them, and I respect your gratitude. I will order some repairs in your cottage, and I hope we shall live to be friends when we know each other better."

"Those of my age," returned the dame, "make no new friends. I thank you for your bounty—it is well intended undoubtedly; but I have all I want, and I cannot accept more at your lordship's hands."

"Well then," continued the Lord Keeper, "at least allow me to say, that I look upon you as a woman of sense and education beyond your appearance, and that I hope you will continue to reside on this property of mine rent-free for your life."

"I hope I shall," said the old dame, composedly; "I believe that was made an article in the sale of Ravenswood to your lordship, though such a trifling circumstance may have escaped your recollection."

"I remember—I recollect," said his lordship, somewhat confused. "I perceive you are too much attached to your old friends to accept any benefit from their successor."

"Far from it, my lord; I am grateful for the benefits which I decline, and I wish I could pay you for offering them better than what I am now about to say." The

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Lord Keeper looked at her in some surprise, but said not a word. "My lord," she continued, in an impressive and solemn tone, "take care what you do; you are on the brink of a precipice."

"Indeed?" said the Lord Keeper, his mind reverting to the political circumstances of the country. "Has any thing come to your knowledge—any plot or conspiracy?"

"No, my lord; those who traffic in such commodities do not call into their councils the old, blind, and infirm. My warning is of another kind. You have driven matters hard with the house of Ravenswood. Believe a true tale—they are a fierce house, and there is danger in dealing with men when they become desperate."

"Tush," answered the Keeper; "what has been between us has been the work of the law, not my doing; and to the law they must look, if they would impugn my proceedings."

"Ay, but they may think otherwise, and take the law into their own hand, when they fail of other means of redress."

"What mean you?" said the Lord Keeper. "Young Ravenswood would not have recourse to personal violence?"

"God forbid I should say so! I know nothing of the youth but what is honourable and open—honourable and open, said I?—I should have added, free, generous, noble. But he is still a Ravenswood, and may bide his time. Remember the fate of Sir George Lockhart."*

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* President of the Court of Sessions. He was pistolled in the High Street of Edinburgh, by John Chiesley of Dalry, in the year 1689. The revenge of this desperate man was stimulated by an opinion that he had sustained injustice in a decreet-arbitral pronounced by the President, assigning an alimentary provision of about 93*l.* in favour of his wife and children. He is said at first to have designed to shoot the judge while attending upon divine worship, but was diverted by some feeling concerning the sanctity of the place. After the congregation was dismissed, he dogged his victim as far as the head of the close on the south side of the Lawn-market, in which the President's house was situated, and shot him dead as he was about to enter it. This act was done in the presence of numerous spectators. The assassin made no attempt to fly, but boasted of the deed, saying, "I have taught the President how to do justice." He had at least given him fair warning, as Jack Cade says on a similar occasion. The murderer, after undergoing the torture, by a special act of the Estates of Parliament, was tried before the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, as high

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The Lord Keeper started as she called to his recollection a tragedy so deep and so recent. The old woman proceeded: "Chiesley, who did the deed, was a relative of Lord Ravenswood. In the hall of Ravenswood, in my presence, and in that of others, he avowed publicly his determination to do the cruelty which he afterwards committed. I could not keep silence, though to speak it ill became my station. 'You are devising a dreadful crime,' I said, 'for which you must reckon before the judgment-seat.' Never shall I forget his look, as he replied, 'I must reckon then for many things, and will reckon for this also.' Therefore I may well say, beware of pressing a desperate man with the hand of authority. There is blood of Chiesley in the veins of Ravenswood, and one drop of it were enough to fire him in the circumstances in which he is placed—I say beware of him."

The old dame had, either intentionally or by accident, harped aright the fear of the Lord Keeper. The desperate and dark resource of private assassination, so familiar to a Scottish baron in former times, had even in the present age been too frequently resorted to under the pressure of unusual temptation, or where the mind of the actor was prepared for such a crime. Sir William Ashton was aware of this; as also that young Ravenswood had received injuries sufficient to prompt him to that sort of revenge, which becomes a frequent though fearful consequence of the partial administration of justice. He endeavoured to disguise from Alice the nature of the apprehensions which he entertained, but so ineffectually, that a person even of less penetration than nature had endowed her with must necessarily have been aware that the subject lay near his bosom. His voice was changed in its accent as he replied to her, that the Master of Ravenswood was a man of honour; and, were it otherwise,

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sheriff, and condemned to be dragged on a hurdle to the place of execution, to have his right hand struck off while yet he lived, and, finally, to be hung on the gallows with the pistol wherewith he shot the President tied round his neck. This execution took place on the 3d of April, 1689; and the incident was long remembered as a dreadful instance of what the law books call the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*.

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that the fate of Chiesley of Dalry was a sufficient warning to any one who should dare to assume the office of avenger of his own imaginary wrongs. And having hastily uttered these expressions, he rose and left the place without waiting for a reply.

CHAPTER V.

———Is she a Capulet?
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.
Shakspeare.

THE Lord Keeper walked for nearly a quarter of a mile in profound silence. His daughter naturally timid, and bred up in those ideas of filial awe and implicit obedience which were inculcated upon the youth of that period, did not venture to interrupt his meditations.

"Why do you look so pale, Lucy?" said her father, turning suddenly round and breaking silence.

According to the ideas of the time, which did not permit a young woman to offer her sentiments on any subject of importance unless especially required to do so, Lucy was bound to appear ignorant of the meaning of all that had passed betwixt Alice and her father, and imputed the emotion he had observed to the fear of the wild cattle which grazed in that part of the extensive chase through which they were now walking.

Of these animals, the descendants of the savage herds which anciently roamed free in the Caledonian forests, it was formerly a point of state to preserve a few in the parks of the Scottish nobility. Specimens continued within the memory of man to be kept at least at three houses of distinction, Hamilton namely, Drumlanrick, and Cumbernauld. They had degenerated from the ancient race in size and strength, if we are to judge from the ac-

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counts of old chronicles, and from the formidable remains frequently discovered in bogs and morasses when drained and laid open. The bull had lost the shaggy honours of his mane, and the race was small and light made, in colour a dingy white, or rather a pale yellow, with black horns and hoofs. They retained, however, in some measure, the ferocity of their ancestry, could not be domesticated on account of their antipathy to the human race, and were often dangerous if approached unguardedly, or wantonly disturbed. It was this last reason which has occasioned their being extirpated at the places we have mentioned, where probably they would otherwise have been retained as appropriate inhabitants of a Scottish woodland, and fit tenants for a baronial forest. A few, if I mistake not, are still preserved at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland, the seat of the Earl of Tankerville.

It was to her finding herself in the vicinity of a group of three or four of these animals, that Lucy thought proper to impute those signs of fear, which had arisen in her countenance for a different reason. For she had been familiarized with the appearance of the wild cattle, during her walks in the chase; and it was not then, as it may be now, a necessary part of a young lady's demeanour, to indulge in causeless tremors of the nerves. On the present occasion, however, she speedily found cause for real terror.

Lucy had scarcely replied to her father in the words we have mentioned, and he was just about to rebuke her supposed timidity, when a bull, stimulated either by the scarlet colour of Miss Ashton's mantle, or by one of those fits of capricious ferocity to which their dispositions are liable, detached himself suddenly from the group which was feeding at the upper extremity of a grassy glade, that seemed to lose itself among the crossing and entangled boughs. The animal approached the intruders on his pasture ground, at first slowly, pawing the ground with his hoof, bellowing from time to time, and tearing up the sand with his horns, as if to lash himself up to rage and violence.

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The Lord Keeper, who observed the animal's demeanour, was aware that he was about to become mischievous, and drawing his daughter's arm under his own, began to walk fast along the avenue, in hopes to get out of his sight and his reach. This was the most injudicious course he could have adopted, for, encouraged by the appearance of flight, the bull began to pursue them at full speed. Assailed by a danger so imminent, firmer courage than that of the Lord Keeper might have given way. But paternal tenderness, "love strong as death," sustained him. He continued to support and drag onward his daughter, until her fears altogether depriving her of the power of flight, she sunk down by his side; and when he could no longer assist her to escape, he turned round and placed himself betwixt her and the raging animal, which advancing in full career, its brutal fury enhanced by the rapidity of the pursuit, was now within a few yards of them. The Lord Keeper had no weapons; his age and gravity dispensed even with the usual appendage of a walking sword,—could such appendage have availed him anything.

It seemed inevitable that the father or daughter, or both, should have fallen victims to the impending danger, when a shot from the neighbouring thicket arrested the progress of the animal. He was so truly struck between the junction of the spine with the skull, that the wound, which in any other part of his body might scarce have impeded his career, proved instantly fatal. Stumbling forward with a hideous bellow, the progressive force of his previous motion, rather than any operation of his limbs, carried him up to within three yards of the astonished Lord Keeper, where he rolled on the ground, his limbs darkened with the black death-sweat, and quivering with the last convulsions of muscular motion.

Lucy lay senseless on the ground, insensible of the wonderful deliverance which she had experienced. Her father was almost equally stupified, so rapid and unexpected had been the transition from the horrid death

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which seemed inevitable, to perfect security. He gazed on the animal, terrible even in death, with a species of mute and confused astonishment, which did not permit him distinctly to understand what had taken place, and so inaccurate was his consciousness of what had passed, that he might have supposed the bull had been arrested in its career by a thunderbolt, had he not observed among the branches of the thicket the figure of a man, with a short gun or musketoon in his hand.

This instantly recalled him to a sense of their situation —a glance at his daughter reminded him of the necessity of procuring her assistance. He called to the man whom he concluded to be one of his foresters, to give immediate attention to Miss Ashton, while he himself hastened to call assistance. The huntsman approached them accordingly and the Lord Keeper saw he was a stranger, but was too much agitated to make any farther remarks. In a few hurried words, he directed the shooter, as stronger and more active than himself, to carry the young lady to a neighbouring fountain, while he went back to Alice's hut to procure more aid.

The man to whose timely interference they had been so much indebted, did not seem inclined to leave his good work half finished. He raised Lucy from the ground in his arms, and conveying her through the glades of the forest by paths with which he seemed well acquainted, stopped not until he laid her in safety by the side of a plentiful and pellucid fountain, which had been once covered in, screened and decorated with architectural ornaments of a Gothic character. But now the vault which had covered it being broken down and riven, and the Gothic front ruined and demolished, the stream burst forth from the recess of the earth in open day, and winded its way among the broken sculpture and moss-grown stones which lay in confusion around its source.

Tradition, always busy, at least in Scotland, to grace with a legendary tale a spot in itself interesting, had ascribed a cause of peculiar veneration to this fountain. A

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beautiful young lady met one of the Lords of Ravenswood while hunting near this spot, and, like a second Egeria, had captivated the affections of the feudal Numa. They met frequently afterwards, and always at sunset, the charms of the nymph's mind completing the conquest which her beauty had begun, and the mystery of the intrigue adding zest to both. She always appeared and disappeared close by the fountain, with which, therefore, her lover judged she had some inexplicable connection. She placed certain restrictions on their intersourse, which also savoured of mystery. They met only once a-week, Friday was the appointed day—and she explained to the Lord of Ravenswood, that they were under the necessity of separating so soon as the bell of a chapel, belonging to a hermitage in the adjoining wood, now long ruinous, should toll the hour of vespers. In the course of his confession, the Baron of Ravenswood intrusted the hermit with the secret of this singular amour, and Father Zachary drew the necessary and obvious consequence, that his patron was enveloped in the toils of Satan, and in danger of destruction both to body and soul. He urged these perils to the Baron with all the force of monkish rhetoric, and described, in the most frightful colours, the real character and person of the apparently lovely Naiad, whom he hesitated not to denounce as a limb of the kingdom of darkness. The lover listened with obstinate incredulity; and it was not until worn out by the obstinacy of the anchoret, that he consented to put the state and condition of his mistress to a certain trial, and for that purpose acquiesced in Zachary's proposal, that on their next interview the vesper's bell should be rung half an hour later than usual. The hermit maintained and bucklered his opinion, by quotations from *Malleus Malificarum*, *Sprengerus*, *Remigius*, and other learned dæmonologists, that the Evil One, thus seduced to remain behind the appointed hour, would assume her true shape, and, having appeared to her terrified lover as a fiend of hell, would vanish from him in a flash of sulphurous lightning. Raymond of Ravenswood acquiesced in the experiment, not

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incurious concerning the issue, though confident it would disappoint the expectations of the hermit.

At the appointed hour the lovers met, and their interview was protracted beyond that at which they usually parted, by the delay of the priest to ring his usual curfew. No change took place upon the nymph's outward form; but as soon as the lengthening shadows made her aware that the usual hour of the vespers chime was passed, she tore herself from her lover's arms with a shriek of despair, bid him adieu for ever, and plunging into the fountain, disappeared from his eyes. The bubbles occasioned by her descent were crimsoned with blood as they arose, leading the distracted baron to infer, that his ill-judged curiosity had occasioned the death of this interesting and mysterious being. The remorse which he felt, as well as the recollection of her charms, proved the penance of his future life, which he lost in the battle of Flodden not many months after. But, in memory of his Naiad, he had previously ornamented the fountain in which she appeared to reside, and secured its waters from profanation or pollution, by the small vaulted building of which the fragments still remained scattered around it. From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay.

Such was the generally received legend, which some, who would seem wiser than the vulgar, explained, as obscurely intimating the fate of a beautiful maid of plebeian rank, the mistress of this Raymond, whom he slew in a fit of jealousy, and whose blood was mingled with the waters of the locked fountain, as it was commonly called. Others imagined that the tale had a more remote origin in the ancient heathen mythology. All however agreed, that the spot was fatal to the Ravenswood family; and that to drink of the waters of the well, or even approach its brink, was as ominous to a descendant of that house, as for a Grahame to wear green, a Bruce to kill a spider, or a St. Clair to cross the Ord on a Monday.

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It was on this ominous spot that Lucy Ashton first drew breath after her long and almost deadly swoon. Beautiful and pale as the fabulous Naiad in the last agony of separation from her lover, she was seated so as to rest with her back against a part of the ruined wall, while her mantle, dripping with the water which her protector had used profusely to recall her senses, clung to her slender and beautifully proportioned form.

The first moment of recollection brought to her mind the danger which had overpowered her senses—the next called to remembrance that of her father. She looked around—he was no where to be seen—"My father—my father!" was all that she could ejaculate.

"Sir William is safe," answered the voice of a stranger—"perfectly safe, and will be with you instantly."

"Are you sure of that?" exclaimed Lucy—"the bull was close by us—do not stop me—I must go to seek my father!"

And she arose with that purpose; but her strength was so much exhausted, that, far from possessing the power to execute her purpose, she must have fallen against the stone on which she had leant, probably not without sustaining serious injury.

The stranger was so near to her, that, without actually suffering her to fall, he could not avoid catching her in his arms, which, however, he did with a momentary reluctance, very unusual when youth interposes to prevent beauty from danger. It seemed as if her weight, slight as it was, proved too heavy for her young and athletic assistant, for, without feeling the temptation of detaining her in his arms even for a single instant, he again placed her on the stone from which she had risen, and retreating a few steps, repeated hastily, "Sir William Ashton is perfectly safe, and will be here instantly. Do not make yourself anxious on his account—Fate has singularly preserved him. You, madam, are exhausted, and must not think of rising until you have some assistance more suitable than mine."

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Lucy, whose senses were by this time more effectually collected, was naturally led to look at the stranger with attention. There was nothing in his appearance which should have rendered him unwilling to offer his arm to a young lady who required support, or which could have induced her to refuse his assistance; and she could not help thinking, even in that moment, that he seemed cold and reluctant to offer it. A shooting-dress of dark cloth, intimated the rank of the wearer, though concealed in part by a large and loose cloak of a dark brown colour. A Montero cap and a black feather drooped over the wearer's brow, and partly concealed his features, which, so far as seen, were dark, regular and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen, expression. Some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion, had quenched the light and ingenuous vivacity of youth in a countenance singularly fitted to display both, and it was not easy to gaze on the stranger without a secret impression either of pity or awe, or at least of doubt and curiosity allied to both.

The impression which we have necessarily been long in describing, Lucy felt in the glance of a moment, and had no sooner encountered the keen black eyes of the stranger, than her own were bent on the ground with a mixture of bashful embarrassment and fear. Yet there was a necessity to speak, or at least she thought so, and in a fluttered accent she began to mention her wonderful escape, in which she was sure that the stranger must, under heaven, have been her father's protector, and her own.

He seemed to shrink from her expressions of gratitude while he replied abruptly, "I leave you, madam," the deep melody of his voice rendered powerful, but not harsh, by something like a severity of tone—"I leave you to the protection of those to whom it is possible you may have this day been a guardian angel."

Lucy was surprised at the ambiguity of his language, and, with a feeling of artless and unaffected gratitude, began to deprecate the idea of having intended to give

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her deliverer any offence, as if such a thing had been possible. "I have been unfortunate," she said, "in endeavouring to express my thanks—I am sure it must be so, though I cannot recollect what I said—but would you but stay till my father—till the Lord Keeper comes—would you only permit him to pay you his thanks, and to inquire your name?"

"My name is unnecessary," answered the stranger; "your father—I would rather say Sir William Ashton—will learn it soon enough, for all the pleasure it is likely to afford him."

"You mistake him," said Lucy earnestly; "he will be grateful for my sake and for his own. You do not know my father or you are deceiving me with a story of his safety when he has already fallen a victim to the fury of that animal."

When she had caught this idea, she started from the ground, and endeavoured to press towards the avenue in which the accident had taken place, while the stranger, though he seemed to hesitate between the desire to assist and the wish to leave her, was obliged in common humanity, to oppose her both by entreaty and action.

"On the word of a gentleman, madam, I tell you the truth; your father is in perfect safety; you will expose yourself to injury if you venture back where the herd of wild cattle grazed—If you will go"—for, having once adopted the idea that her father was still in danger, she pressed forward in spite of him—"if you will go, accept my arm, though I am not perhaps the person who can with most propriety offer you support."

But without heeding this intimation, Lucy took him at his word, "O if you be a man," she said,—"if you be a gentleman, assist me to find my father—You shall not leave me—you must go with me—he is dying perhaps while we are talking here."

Then, without listening to excuse or apology, and holding fast by the stranger's arm, though unconscious of anything save the support which it gave, and without which she could not have moved, mixed with a vague feeling

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of preventing his escape from her, she was urging, and almost dragging him forward, when Sir William Ashton came up, followed by the female attendant of blind Alice, and by two wood-cutters, whom he had summoned from their occupation to his assistance. His joy at seeing his daughter safe, overcame the surprise with which he would at another time have beheld her hanging as familiarly on the arm of a stranger, as she might have done upon his own.

"Lucy, my dear Lucy, are you safe?—are you well?" were the only words that broke from him as he embraced her in ecstasy.

"I am well, sir, thank God! and still more that I see you so;—but this gentleman," she said, quitting his arm, and shrinking from him, "what must he think of me?" and her eloquent blood, flushing over neck and brow, spoke how much she was ashamed of the freedom with which she had craved, and even compelled his assistance.

"This gentleman," said Sir William Ashton, "will, I trust not regret the trouble we have given him, when I assure him of the gratitude of the Lord Keeper for the greatest service which one man ever rendered to another —for the life of my child—for my own life, which he has saved by his bravery and presence of mind. He will, I am sure, permit us to request—"

"Request nothing of ME, my lord," said the stranger, in a stern and peremptory tone; "I am the Master of Ravenswood."

There was a dead pause of surprise, not unmixed with less pleasant feelings. The Master wrapt himself in his cloak, made a haughty inclination towards Lucy, muttering a few words of courtesy, as indistinctly heard as they seemed to be reluctantly uttered, and turning from them was immediately lost in the thicket.

"The Master of Ravenswood!" said the Lord Keeper, when he had recovered his momentary astonishment —"Hasten after him—stop him—beg him to speak to me for a single moment."

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The two foresters accordingly set off in pursuit of the stranger. They speedily reappeared, and, in an embarrassed and awkward manner, said the gentleman would not return. The Lord Keeper took one of the fellows aside, and questioned him more closely what the Master of Ravenswood had said.

"He just said he wadna come back," said the man, with the caution of a prudent Scotchman, who cared not to be the bearer of an unpleasant errand.

"He said something more, sir," said the Lord Keeper, "and I insist on knowing what it was."

"Why, then, my lord," said the man, looking down, "he said—but it wad be nae pleasure to your lordship to hear it, for I dare say the Master meant nae ill."

"That's none of your concern, sir; I desire to hear the very words."

"Weel then," replied the man, "he said, tell Sir William Ashton, that the next time he and I forgather, he will not be half sae blithe of our meeting as of our parting."

"Very well, sir," said the Lord Keeper, "I believe he alludes to a wager we have on our hawks—it is a matter of no consequence."

He turned to his daughter, who was by this time so much recovered as to be able to walk home. But the effect which the various recollections, connected with a scene so terrific, made upon a mind which was susceptible in an extreme degree, was more permanent than the injury which her nerves had sustained. Visions of terror, both in sleep and in waking reveries, recalled to her the form of the furious animal, and the dreadful bellow with which he accompanied his career; and it was always the image of the Master of Ravenswood, with his native nobleness of countenance and form, that seemed to interpose betwixt her and assured death. It is, perhaps, at all times dangerous for a young person to suffer recollection to dwell repeatedly, and with too much complacency, on the same individual; but in Lucy's situation it was almost unavoidable. She had never happened to see a young man of mien and features so romantic and so striking as young

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Ravenswood; but had she seen an hundred his equals or his superiors in those particulars, no one else could have been linked to her heart by the strong associations of remembered danger and escape, of gratitude, wonder and curiosity. I say curiosity, for it is likely that the singularly restrained and unaccommodating manners of the Master of Ravenswood, so much at variance with the natural expression of his features and grace of his deportment, as they excited wonder by the contrast, had their effect in rivetting her attention to the recollection. She knew little of Ravenswood, or the disputes which had existed betwixt her father and his, and perhaps could in her gentleness of mind hardly have comprehended the angry and bitter passions which they had engendered. But she knew that he was come of noble stem; was poor, though descended from the noble and the wealthy; and she felt that she could sympathize with the feelings of a proud mind, which urged him to recoil from the proffered gratitude of the new proprietors of his father's house and domains. Would he have equally shunned their acknowledgments and avoided their intimacy, had her father's request been urged more mildly, less abruptly, and softened with the grace which women so well know how to throw into their manner, when they mean to mediate betwixt the headlong passions of the ruder sex? This was a perilous question to ask her own mind—perilous both in the idea and in its consequences.

Lucy Ashton, in short, was involved in those mazes of the imagination which are most dangerous to the young and the sensitive. Time, it is true, absence, change of scene and new faces, might probably have destroyed the illusion in her instance as it has done in many others; but her residence remained solitary, and her mind without those means of dissipating her pleasing visions. This solitude was chiefly owing to the absence of Lady Ashton, who was at this time in Edinburgh, watching the progress of some state-intrigue; the Lord Keeper only received society out of policy or ostentation, and was by nature rather reserved and unsociable; and thus no cavalier ap-

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peared to rival or to obscure the ideal picture of chivalrous excellence which Lucy had pictured to herself in the Master of Ravenswood.

While Lucy indulged in these dreams, she made frequent visits to old blind Alice, hoping it would be easy to lead her to talk on the subject, which at present she had so imprudently admitted to occupy so large a portion of her thoughts. But Alice did not in this particular gratify her wishes and expectations. She spoke readily, and with pathetic feeling, concerning the family in general, but seemed to observe an especial and cautious silence on the subject of the present representative. The little she said of him was not altogether so favourable as Lucy had anticipated. She hinted that he was of a stern and unforgiving character, more ready to resent than to pardon injuries; and Lucy combined with great alarm the hints which she now dropped of these dangerous qualities, with Alice's advice to her father, so emphatically given, "to beware of Ravenswood."

But that very Ravenswood, of whom such unjust suspicions had been entertained, had, almost immediately after they had been uttered, confuted them by saving at once her father's life and her own. Had he nourished such black revenge as Alice's dark hints seemed to indicate, no deed of active guilt was necessary to the full gratification of that evil passion. He needed but to have withheld for an instant his indispensable and effective assistance, and the object of his resentment must have perished, without any direct aggression on his part, by a death equally fearful and certain. She conceived, therefore, that some secret prejudice, or the suspicions incident to age and misfortune, had led Alice to form conclusions injurious to the character, and irreconcilable both with the generous conduct and noble features of the Master of Ravenswood. And in this belief Lucy reposed her hope, and went on weaving her enchanted web of fairy tissue, as beautiful and transient as the film of the gossamer, when it is pearled with the morning dew, and glimmering to the sun.

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Her father, in the meanwhile, as well as the Master of Ravenswood, were making reflections, as frequent, though more solid than those of Lucy, upon the singular event which had taken place. The Lord Keeper's first task, when he returned home, was to ascertain by medical advice that his daughter had sustained no injury from the dangerous and alarming situation in which she had been placed. Satisfied on this topic, he proceeded to revise the memoranda which he had taken down from the mouth of the person employed to interrupt the funeral service of the late Lord Ravenswood. Bred to casuistry, and well accustomed to practise the ambidexter ingenuity of the bar, it cost him little trouble to soften the features of the tumult which he had been at first so anxious to exaggerate. He preached to his colleagues of the Privy Council, the necessity of using conciliatory measures with young men whose blood and temper were hot, and their experience of life limited. He did not hesitate to attribute some censure to the conduct of the officer, as having been unnecessarily irritating.

These were the contents of his public despatches. The letters which he wrote to those private friends into whose management the matter was likely to fall, were of a yet more favourable tenor. He represented that lenity in this case would be equally politic and popular, whereas, considering the high respect with which the rites of interment are regarded in Scotland, any severity exercised against the Master of Ravenswood for protecting those of his father from interruption, would be on all sides most unfavourably construed. And, finally, assuming the language of a generous and high-spirited man, he made it his particular request that this affair should be passed over without severe notice. He alluded with delicacy to the predicament in which he himself stood with young Ravenswood, as having succeeded in the long train of litigation by which the fortunes of that noble house had been so much reduced, and confessed it would be most peculiarly acceptable to his own feelings, could he find means in

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some sort to counterbalance the disadvantages which he had occasioned the family, though only in the prosecution of his just and lawful rights. He therefore made it his particular and personal request that the matter should have no farther consequences, and insinuated a desire that he himself should have the merit of having put a stop to it by his favourable report and intercession. It was particularly remarkable, that, contrary to his uniform practice, he made no special communication to Lady Ashton upon the subject of the tumult; and although he mentioned the alarm which Lucy had received from one of the wild cattle, yet he gave no detailed account of an incident so interesting and terrible.

There was much surprise among Sir William Ashton's political friends and colleagues on receiving letters of a tenor so unexpected. On comparing notes together, one smiled, one put up his eyebrows, a third nodded acquiescence in the general wonder, and a fourth asked, if they were sure these were *all* the letters the Lord Keeper had written on the subject. "It runs strangely in my mind, my lords, that none of these advices contain the root of the matter."

But no secret letters of a contrary nature had been received, although the question seemed to imply the possibility of their existence.

"Well," said an old grey-headed statesman, who had contrived, by shifting and trimming, to maintain his post at the steerage through all the changes of course which the vessel had held for thirty years, "I thought Sir William would have verified the auld Scottish saying, 'as soon comes the lamb's skin to market as the auld tup's.'"

"We must please him after his own fashion," said another, "though it be an unlooked-for one."

"A wilful man maun hae his way," answered the old counsellor.

"The Keeper will rue this before year and day are out," said a third; "the Master of Ravenswood is the lad to wind him a pirn."[2]

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"Why, what would you do, my lords, with the poor young fellow?" said a noble Marquis present; "the Lord Keeper has got all his estates—he has not a cross to bless himself with."

On which the ancient Lord Turntippet replied,

'If he hasna gear to fine,
He has shins to pine—

and that was our way before the revolution—*Luitur cum persona, qui luere non potest cum crumena*[3]—Hegh, my lords, that's gude law Latin."

"I can see no motive," replied the Marquis, "that any noble lord can have for urging this matter farther; let the Lord Keeper have the power to deal in it as he pleases."

"Agree, agree—remit to the Lord Keeper, with any other person for fashion's sake—Lord Hirplehooly, who is bed-ridden—one to be a quorum—Make your entry in the minutes, Mr. Clerk.—And now, my lords, there is that young scatter-good, the Laird of Bucklaw's fine to be disponed upon—I suppose it goes to my Lord Treasurer?"

"Shame be in my meal-poke then," exclaimed Lord Turntippet, "and your hand aye in the nook of it! I had set that down for a by bit between meals for mysell."

"To use one of your favourite saws, my lord," replied the Marquis, "you are like the miller's dog, that licks his lips before the bag is untied—the man is not fined yet."

"But that costs but twa skarts of a pen," said Lord Turntippet; "and surely there is nae noble lord that will presume to say, that I, wha hae complied wi' a' compliances, tane all manner of tests, abjured all that was to be abjured, and sworn a' that was to be sworn, for these thirty years by-past, sticking fast by my duty to the state through good report and bad report, shouldna hae something now and then to synd my mouth wi' after sic drouthy wark? Eh?"

"It would be very unreasonable indeed, my lord," replied the Marquis "had we either thought that your

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lordship's drought was quenchable, or observed anything stick in your throat that required washing down."

And so we close the scene of the Privy Council of that period.

CHAPTER VI.

> For this are all these warriors come,
> To hear an idle tale;
> And o'er our death-accustomed arms
> Shall silly tears prevail?——*Henry Mackenzie.*

On the evening of the day when the Lord Keeper and his daughter were saved from such imminent peril, two strangers were seated in the most private apartment of a small obscure inn, or rather alehouse, called the Tod's Den, about three or four miles from the Castle of Ravenswood, and as far from the ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, betwixt which two places it was situated.

One of these strangers was about forty years of age, tall, and thin in the flanks, with an aquiline nose, dark penetrating eyes, and a shrewd but sinister cast of countenance. The other was about fifteen years younger, short, stout, ruddy-faced, and red-haired, with an open, resolute, and cheerful eye, to which careless and fearless freedom, and inward daring, gave fire and expression, notwithstanding its light grey colour. A stoup of wine, (for in those days it was served out from the cask in pewter flagons,) was placed on the table, and each had his quaigh or bicker* before him. But there was little appearance of conviviality. With folded arms, and looks of anxious expectation, they eyed each other in silence, each wrapped in his own thoughts, and holding no communication with his neighbour.

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* Drinking cups, of different sizes, made out of staves hooped together. The *quaigh* was used chiefly for drinking wine or brandy; it might hold about a gill, and was often composed of rare wood, and curiously ornamented with silver

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At length the younger broke silence by exclaiming, "What the foul fiend can detain the Master so long? he must have miscarried in his enterprize.—Why did you dissuade me from going with him?"

"One man is enough to right his own wrong," said the taller and older personage; "we venture our lives for him in coming thus far on such an errand."

"You are but a craven after all, Craigengelt," answered the younger, "and that's what many folk have thought you before now."

"But what none has dared to tell me," said Craigengelt, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword; "and, but that I hold a hasty man no better than a fool, I would"—he paused for his companion's answer.

"*Would* you?" said the other coolly; "and why do you not then?"

Craigengelt drew his cutlass an inch or two, and then returned it with violence into the scabbard—"Because there is a deeper stake to be played for, than the lives of twenty hair-brained gowks like you."

"You are right there," said his companion, "for if it were not that these forfeitures, and that last fine that the old driveller Turntippet is gaping for, and which, I dare say, is laid on by this time, have fairly driven me out of house and home, I were a coxcomb and a cuckoo to boot, to trust your fair promises of getting me a commission in the Irish brigade,—what have I to do with the Irish brigade? I am a plain Scotchman, as my father was before me; and my grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, cannot live for ever."

"Ay, Bucklaw," observed Craigengelt, "but she may live for many a long day; and for your father, he had land and living, kept himself close from wadsetters and money-lenders, paid each man his due, and lived on his own."

"And whose fault is it that I have not done so too?" said Bucklaw—"whose but the devil's and your's, and such like as you, that have led me to the far end of a fair estate? and now I shall be obliged, I suppose, to shelter and

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shift about like yourself—live one week upon a line of secret intelligence from Saint Germains—another upon a report of a rising in the Highlands—get my breakfast and morning-draught of sack from old Jacobite ladies, and give them locks of my old wig for the Chevalier's hair—second my friend in his quarrel till he comes to the field, and then flinch from him lest so important a political agent should perish from the way. All this I must do for bread, besides calling myself a captain !"

"You think you are making a fine speech now," said Craigengelt, "and showing much wit at my expense. Is starving or hanging better than the life I am obliged to lead, because the present fortunes of the king cannot sufficiently support his envoys ?"

"Starving is honester, Craigengelt, and hanging is like to be the end on't—But what you mean to make of this poor fellow Ravenswood, I know not—he has no money left, any more than I—his lands are all pawned and pledged, and the interest eats up the rents, and is not satisfied; and what do you hope to make by meddling in his affairs?"

"Content yourself, Bucklaw; I know my business," replied Craigengelt. "Besides that his name, and his father's services in 1689, will make such an acquisition sound well both at Versailles and Saint Germains—you will also please be informed, that the Master of Ravenswood is a very different kind of a young fellow from you. He has parts and address, as well as courage and talents, and will present himself abroad like a young man of head as well as heart, who knows something more than the speed of a horse or the flight of a hawk. I have lost credit of late, by bringing over no one that had sense to know more than how to unharbour a stag, or take and reclaim an eyeass. The Master has education, sense, and penetration."

"And yet is not wise enough to escape the tricks of a kidnapper, Craigengelt?" replied the younger man. "But don't be angry; you know you will not fight, and so it is as well to leave your hilt in peace and quiet, and tell me in sober guise how you drew the Master into your confidence?"

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"By flattering his love of vengeance, Bucklaw," replied Craigengelt. "He has always distrusted me, but I watched my time, and struck while his temper was red-hot with the sense of insult and of wrong. He goes now to expostulate, as he says, and perhaps thinks, with Sir William Ashton. I say, that if they meet, and the lawyer puts him to his defence, the Master will kill him; for he had that sparkle in his eye which never deceives you when you would read a man's purpose. At any rate, he will give him such a bullying as will be construed into an assault on a privy-counsellor; so there will be a total breach betwixt him and government; Scotland will be too hot for him, France will gain him, and we will all set sail together in the French brig L'Espoir, which is hovering for us off Eyemouth."

"Content am I," said Bucklaw; "Scotland has little left that I care about; and if carrying the Master with us will get us a better reception in France, why, so be it, a God's name. I doubt our own merits will procure us slender preferment; and I trust he will send a ball through the Keeper's head before he joins us. One or two of these scoundrel statesmen should be shot once a-year, just to keep the others on their good behaviour."

"That is very true," replied Craigengelt; "and it reminds me that I must go and see that our horses have been fed, and are in readiness; for, should such deed be done, it will be no time for grass to grow beneath their heels." He proceeded as far as the door, then turned back with a look of earnestness, and said to Bucklaw, "Whatever should come of this business, I am sure you will do me the justice to remember, that I said nothing to the Master which could imply my accession to any act of violence which he may take it into his head to commit."

"No, no, not a single word like accession," replied Bucklaw; "you know too well the risk belonging to these two terrible words, art and part." Then, as if to himself, he recited the following lines:

> "The dial spoke not, but it made shrewd signs,
> And pointed full upon the stroke of murder."

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"What is that you are talking to yourself?" said Craigengelt, turning back with some anxiety.

"Nothing—only two lines I have heard upon the stage," replied his companion.

"Bucklaw," said Craigengelt, "I sometimes think you should have been a stage-player yourself; all is fancy and frolic with you."

"I have often thought so myself," said Bucklaw, "I believe it would be safer than acting with you in The Fatal Conspiracy.—But away, play your own part, and look after the horses like a groom as you are.—A play-actor! a stage-player!" he repeated to himself; "that would have deserved a stab, but that Craigengelt's a coward—And yet I should like the profession well enough—Stay—let me see—ay—I would come out in Alexander—

> 'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love,
> Draw all your swords, and quick as lightning move;
> When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay,
> 'Tis love commands, and glory leads the way.'"

As with a voice of thunder, and his hand upon his sword, Bucklaw repeated the ranting couplets of poor Lee, Craigengelt re-entered with a face of alarm.

"We are undone, Bucklaw! the Master's led horse has cast himself over his halter in the stable, and is dead lame—his hackney will be set up with the day's work, and now he has no fresh horse; he will never get off."

"Egad, there will be no moving with the speed of lightning this bout," said Bucklaw, dryly. "But stay, you can give him yours."

"What! and be taken myself? I thank you for the proposal," said Craigengelt.

"Why," replied Bucklaw, "if the Lord Keeper should have met with a mischance, which for my part I cannot suppose, for the Master is not the lad to shoot an old and unarmed man—but *if* there should have been a fray at the Castle, you are neither art nor part in it, you know, so have nothing to fear."

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"True, true," answered the other, with embarrassment; "but consider my commission from Saint Germains."

"Which many men think is a commission of your own making, noble captain.—Well, if you will not give him your horse, why, d—n it, he must have mine."

"Yours?" said Craigengelt.

"Ay, mine," repeated Bucklaw; "it shall never be said that I agreed to back a gentleman in a little affair of honour, and neither helped him on with it nor off from it."

"You will give him your horse? and have you considered the loss?"

"Loss! why Grey Gilbert cost me twenty Jacobuses, that's true; but then his hackney is worth something, and his Black Moor is worth twice as much were he sound, and I know how to handle him. Take a fat sucking mastiff whelp, flay and bowel him, stuff the body full of black and grey snails, roast a reasonable time, and baste with oil of spikenard, saffron, cinnamon and honey, anoint with the dripping, working it in"——

"Yes, Bucklaw, but in the meanwhile, before the sprain is cured, nay, before the whelp is roasted, you will be caught and hung. Depend on it, the chase will be hard after Ravenswood. I wish we had made our place of rendezvous nearer to the coast."

"On my faith then," said Bucklaw, "I had best go off just now, and leave my horse for him—Stay, stay, he comes, I hear a horse's feet."

"Are you sure there is only one?" said Craigengelt; "I fear there is a chase; I think I hear three or four galloping together; I am sure I hear more horses than one."

"Pooh, pooh, it is the wench of the house clattering to the well in her pattens; by my faith, captain, you should give up both your captainship and your secret service, for you are as easily scared as a wild-goose. But here comes the Master alone, and looking as gloomy as a night in November."

The Master of Ravenswood entered the room accordingly, his cloak muffled around him, his arms folded, his looks stern, and at the same time dejected. He flung his

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cloak from him as he entered, threw himself upon a chair, and appeared sunk in a profound reverie.

"What has happened? What have you done?" was hastily demanded by Craigengelt and Bucklaw in the same moment.

"Nothing," was the short and sullen answer.

"Nothing? and left us, determined to call the old villain to account for all the injuries that you, we, and the country have received at his hand? Have you seen him?"

"I have," replied the Master of Ravenswood.

"Seen him? and come away without settling scores which have been so long due?" said Bucklaw; "I would not have expected that at the hand of the Master of Ravenswood."

"No matter what you expected," replied Ravenswood; "it is not to you, sir, that I shall be disposed to render any reason for my conduct."

"Patience, Bucklaw," said Craigengelt, interrupting his companion, who seemed about to make an angry reply. "The Master has been interrupted in his purpose by some accident; but he must excuse the anxious curiosity of friends, who are devoted to his cause like you and me."

"Friends, Captain Craigengelt!" retorted Ravenswood haughtily; "I am ignorant what familiarity has passed betwixt us to entitle you to use that expression. I think our friendship amounts to this, that we agreed to leave Scotland together so soon as I should have visited the alienated mansion of my fathers, and had an interview with its present possessor, I will not call him proprietor."

"Very true, Master," answered Bucklaw; "and as we thought you had a mind to do something to put your neck in jeopardy, Craigie and I very courteously agreed to tarry for you, although ours might run some risk in consequence. As to Craigie, indeed, it does not very much signify, he had gallows written on his brow in the hour of his birth; but I should not like to discredit my parentage by coming to such an end in another man's cause."

"Gentlemen," said the Master of Ravenswood, "I am sorry if I have occasioned you any inconvenience, but I

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must claim the right of judging what is best for my own affairs, without rendering explanations to any one. I have altered my mind, and do not design to leave the country this season."

"Not to leave the country, Master!" exclaimed Craigengelt. "Not to go over, after all the trouble and expense I have incurred—after all the risk of discovery, and the expense of freight and demurrage!"

"Sir," replied the Master of Ravenswood, "when I designed to leave this country in this haste, I made use of your obliging offer to procure me means of conveyance; but I do not recollect that I pledged myself to go off, if I found occasion to alter my mind. For your trouble on my account, I am sorry, and I thank you; your expense," he added, putting his hand into his pocket, "admits a more solid compensation—freight and demurrage are matters with which I am unacquainted, Captain Craigengelt, but take my purse and pay yourself according to your own conscience." And accordingly he tendered a purse with some gold in it to the soi-disant captain.

But here Bucklaw interposed in his turn. "Your fingers, Craigie, seem to itch for that same piece of green net-work," said he; "but I make my vow to God, that if they offer to close upon it, I will chop them off with my whinger. Since the Master has changed his mind, I suppose we need stay here no longer; but in the first place I beg leave to tell him——"

"Tell him anything you will," said Craigengelt, "if you will first allow me to state the inconveniences to which he will expose himself by quitting our society, to remind him of the obstacles to his remaining here, and of the difficulties attending his proper introduction at Versailles and Saint Germains, without the countenance of those who have established useful connections."

"Besides forfeiting the friendship," said Bucklaw, "of at least one man of spirit and honour."

"Gentlemen," said Ravenswood, "permit me once more to assure you, that you have been pleased to attach to our temporary connection more importance than I ever

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meant that it should have. When I repair to foreign courts, I shall not need the introduction of an intriguing adventurer, nor is it necessary for me to set value on the friendship of a hot-headed bully." With these words, and without waiting for an answer, he left the apartment, remounted his horse, and was heard to ride off.

"Mortbleu!" said Captain Craigengelt, "my recruit is lost!"

"Ay, captain," said Bucklaw, "the salmon is off with hook and all. But I will after him, for I have had more of his insolence than I can well digest."

Craigengelt offered to accompany him; but Bucklaw replied, "No, no, captain, keep you the cheek of the chimney-nook till I come back; its good sleeping in a haill skin.

'Little kens the auld wife that sits by the fire,
How cauld the wind blaws in hurle-burle swire.'"

And singing as he went, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

Now, Billy Bewick, keep good heart,
And of thy talking let me be;
But if thou art a man, as I am sure thou art,
Come over the dike and fight with me.

Old Ballad.

The Master of Ravenswood had mounted the ambling hackney which he before rode, on finding the accident which had happened to his led horse, and, for the animal's ease, was proceeding at a slow pace from the Tod's Den towards his old tower of Wolf's Crag, when he heard the galloping of a horse behind him, and looking back, perceived that he was pursued by young Bucklaw, who had been delayed a few minutes in the pursuit by the irresistible temptation of giving the hostler at the Tod's Den some

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recipe for treating the lame horse. This brief delay he had made up by hard galloping, and now overtook the Master, where the road traversed a waste moor. "Halt, sir," cried Bucklaw; "I am no political agent—no Captain Craigengelt, whose life is too important to be hazarded in defence of his honour. I am Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, and no man injures me by word, deed, sign, or look, but he must render me an account of it."

"This is all very well, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," replied the Master of Ravenswood, in a tone the most calm and indifferent; "but I have no quarrel with you, and desire to have none. Our roads homeward, as well as our roads through life, lie in different directions; there is no occasion for us crossing each other."

"Is there not?" said Bucklaw, impetuously. "By heaven! but I say that there is, though—you called us intriguing adventurers."

"Be correct in your recollection, Mr. Hayston; it was to your companion only I applied that epithet, and you know him to be no better."

"And what then? He was my companion for the time, and no man shall insult my companion, right or wrong, while he is in my company."

"Then, Mr. Hayston," replied Ravenswood, with the same composure, "you should choose your society better, or you are like to have much work in your capacity of their champion. Go home, sir, sleep, and have more reason in your wrath to-morrow."

"Not so, Master, you have mistaken your man; high airs and wise saws shall not carry it off thus. Besides, you termed me bully, and you shall retract the word before we part."

"Faith, scarcely," said Ravenswood, "unless you show me better reason for thinking myself mistaken than you are now producing."

"Then, Master," said Bucklaw, "though I should be sorry to offer it to a man of your quality, if you will not justify your incivility, or retract it, or name a place of

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meeting, you must here undergo the hard word and the hard blow."

"Neither will be necessary," said Ravenswood; "I am satisfied with what I have done to avoid an affair with you. If you are serious, this place will serve as well as another."

"Dismount then, and draw," said Bucklaw, setting him an example. "I always thought and said you were a pretty man; I should be sorry to report you otherwise."

"You shall have no reason, sir," said Ravenswood, alighting, and putting himself into a posture of defence.

Their swords crossed, and the combat commenced with great spirit on the part of Bucklaw, who was well accustomed to affairs of the kind, and distinguished by address and dexterity at his weapon. In the present case, however, he did not use his skill to advantage; for, having lost temper at the cool and contemptuous manner in which the Master of Ravenswood had long refused, and at length granted him satisfaction, and urged by his impatience, he adopted the part of an assailant with inconsiderate eagerness. The Master, with equal skill, and much greater composure, remained chiefly on the defensive, and even declined to avail himself of one or two advantages afforded him by the eagerness of his adversary. At length, in a desperate lunge, which he followed with an attempt to close, Bucklaw's foot slipped, and he fell on the short grassy turf on which they were fighting. "Take your life, sir," said the Master of Ravenswood, "and mend it, if you can."

"It would be but a cobbled piece of work, I fear," said Bucklaw, rising slowly and gathering up his sword, much less disconcerted with the issue of the combat than could have been expected from the impetuosity of his temper. "I thank you for my life, Master," he pursued. "There is my hand, I bear no ill will to you either for my bad luck, or your better swordmanship."

The Master looked steadily at him for an instant, then extended his hand to him.—"Bucklaw," he said, "you are a generous fellow, and I have done you wrong. I

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heartily ask your pardon for the expression which offended you; it was hastily and incautiously uttered, and I am convinced it is totally misapplied."

"Are you indeed, Master?" said Bucklaw, his face resuming at once its natural expression of light-hearted carelessness and audacity; "that is more than I expected of you; for, Master, men say, you are not ready to retract your opinions and your language."

"Not when I have well considered them," said the Master.

"Then you are a little wiser than I am, for I always give my friend satisfaction first, and explanation afterwards. If one of us falls, all accounts are settled; if not, men are never so ready for peace as after war. But what does that bawling brat of a boy want?" said Bucklaw. "I wish to heaven he had come a few minutes sooner! and yet it must have been ended some time, and perhaps this way is as well as any other."

As he spoke, the boy he mentioned came up, cudgelling an ass, on which he was mounted, to the top of its speed, and sending, like one of Ossian's heroes, his voice before him,—"Gentlemen,—gentlemen, save yourselves! for the gudewife bade us tell ye there were folk in her house had ta'en Captain Craigengelt, and were seeking for Bucklaw, and that ye behoved to ride for it."

"By my faith, and that's very true, my man," said Bucklaw; "and there's a silver sixpence for your news, and I would give any man twice as much would tell me which way I should ride."

"That will I, Bucklaw," said Ravenswood; "ride home to Wolf's Crag with me. There are places in the old tower where you might lie hid, were a thousand men to seek you."

"But that will bring you into trouble yourself, Master; and unless you be in the Jacobite scrape already, it is quite needless for me to drag you in."

"Not a whit; I have nothing to fear."

"Then I will ride with you blithely, for, to say the truth, I do not know the rendezvous that Craigie was to

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guide us to this night; and I am sure that, if he is taken, he will tell all the truth of me, and twenty lies of you, in order to save himself from the withie."

They mounted, and rode off in company accordingly, striking off the ordinary road, and holding their way by wild moorish unfrequented paths, with which the gentlemen were well acquainted from the exercise of the chase, but through which others would have had much difficulty in tracing their course. They rode for some time in silence, making such haste as the condition of Ravenswood's horse permitted, until night having gradually closed around them, they discontinued their speed, both from the difficulty of discovering their path, and from the hope that they were beyond the reach of pursuit or observation.

"And now that we have drawn bridle a bit," said Bucklaw, "I would fain ask you a question, Master."

"Ask, and welcome," said Ravenswood, "but forgive my not answering it, unless I think proper."

"Well, it is simply this," answered his late antagonist, —"What in the name of old Sathan, could make you, who stand so highly on your reputation, think for a moment of drawing up with such a rogue as Craigengelt, and such a scape-grace as folk call Bucklaw?"

"Simply, because I was desperate, and sought desperate associates."

"And what made you break off from us at the nearest?" again demanded Bucklaw.

"Because I had changed my mind," said the Master, "and renounced my enterprize, at least for the present. And now that I have answered your questions fairly and frankly, tell me what makes you associate with Craigengelt, so much beneath you both in birth and spirit?"

"In plain terms," answered Bucklaw, "because I am a fool, who have gambled away my land in these times. My grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, has ta'en a new tack of life, I think, and I could only hope to get something by a change of government. Craigie was a sort of gambling acquaintance; he saw my condition; and, as the devil is always at one's elbow, told me fifty lies about his cre-

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dentials from Versailles, and his interest at Saint Germains, promised me a captain's commission at Paris, and I have been ass enough to put my thumb under his belt. I dare say, by this time, he has told a dozen pretty stories of me to the government. And this is what I have got by wine, women, and dice, cocks, dogs, and horses.

"Yes, Bucklaw," said the Master, "you have indeed nourished in your bosom the snakes that are now stinging you."

"That's home as well as true, Master," replied his companion; "but, by your leave, you have nursed in your bosom one great goodly snake that has swallowed all the rest, and is as sure to devour you as my half dozen are to make a meal on all that's left of Bucklaw, which is but what lies between bonnet and boot-heel."

"I must not," answered the Master of Ravenswood, "challenge the freedom of speech in which I have set example. What, to speak without a metaphor, do you call this monstrous passion which you charge me with fostering?"

"Revenge, my good sir, revenge; which, if it be as gentleman-like a sin as wine and wassail, with all their *et cæteras*, is equally unchristian, and not so bloodless. It is better breaking a park-pale to watch a doe or damsel, than to shoot an old man."

"I deny the purpose," said the Master of Ravenswood. "On my soul, I had no such intention; I meant but to confront the oppressor ere I left my native land, and upbraid him with his tyranny and its consequences. I would have stated my wrongs so that they would have shaken his soul within him."

"Yes," answered Bucklaw, "and he would have collared you, and cried help, and then you would have shaken the soul out of him, I suppose. Your very look and manner would have frightened the old man to death."

"Consider the provocation," answered Ravenswood,—"consider the ruin and death procured and caused by his hard-hearted cruelty—an ancient house destroyed, an

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affectionate father murdered! Why, in our old Scottish days, he that sat quiet under such wrongs, would have been held neither fit to back a friend nor face a foe."

"Well, Master, I am glad to see that the devil deals as cunningly with other folk as he deals with me; for whenever I am about to commit any folly, he persuades me it is the most necessary, gallant, gentleman-like thing on earth, and I am up to saddlegirths in the bog before I see that the ground is soft. And you, Master, might have turned out a murd——a homicide, just out of pure respect for your father's memory."

"There is more sense in your language, Bucklaw," replied the Master, "than might have been expected from your conduct. It is too true, our vices steal upon us in forms outwardly as fair as those of the demons whom the superstitious represent as intriguing with the human race, and are not discovered in their native hideousness until we have clasped them in our arms."

"But we may throw them from us though," said Bucklaw, "and that is what I shall think of doing one of these days, that is when old Lady Girnington dies."

"Did you ever hear the expression of the English divine?" said Ravenswood—"'Hell is paved with good intentions'—as much as to say, they are more often formed than executed."

"Well," replied Bucklaw, "but I will begin this blessed night, and have determined not to drink above one quart of wine, unless your claret be of extraordinary quality."

"You will find little to tempt you at Wolf's Crag," said the Master. "I know not that I can promise you more than the shelter of my roof; all, and more than all our stock of wine and provisions was exhausted at the late occasion."

"Long may it be ere provision is needed for the like purpose," answered Bucklaw; "but you should not drink up the last flask at a dirge; there is ill luck in that."

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"There is ill luck, I think, in whatever belongs to me," said Ravenswood. "But yonder is Wolf's Crag, and whatever it still contains is at your service."

The roar of the sea had long announced their approach to the cliffs, on the summit of which, like the nest of some sea-eagle, the founder of the fortalice had perched his eyry. The pale moon which had hitherto been contending with flitting clouds, now shone out, and gave them a view of the solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German Ocean. On three sides the rock was precipitous; on the fourth, which was that towards the land, it had been originally fenced by an artificial ditch and draw-bridge, but the latter was broken down and ruinous, and the former had been in part filled up, so as to allow passage for a horseman into the narrow court-yard, encircled on two sides with low offices and stables, partly ruinous, and closed on the landward front by a low embattled wall, while the remaining side of the quadrangle was occupied by the tower itself, which, tall and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder, or more disconsolate dwelling, it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye—a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.

Although the night was not far advanced, there was no sign of living inhabitant about this forlorn abode, excepting that one, and only one, of the narrow and stanchelled windows which appeared at irregular heights and distances in the walls of the building, showed a small glimmer of light.

"There," said Ravenswood, "sits the only male domestic that remains to the house of Ravenswood; and it is well that he does remain there, since otherwise, we had little hope to find either light or fire. But follow me

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cautiously; the road is narrow and admits only one horse in front."

In effect the path led along a kind of isthmus, at the peninsular extremity of which the tower was situated, with that exclusive attention to strength and security, in preference to every circumstance of convenience, which dictated to the Scottish barons the choice of their situations, as well as their style of building.

By adopting the cautious mode of approach recommended by the proprietor of this wild hold, they entered the court-yard in safety. But it was long ere the efforts of Ravenswood, though loudly exerted by knocking at the low-browed entrance, and repeated shouts to Caleb to open the gate and admit them, received any answer.

"The old man must be departed," he began to say "or fallen into some fit; for the noise I have made would have waked the seven sleepers."

At length a timid and hesitating voice, replied,—"Master,—Master of Ravenswood, is it you?"

"Yes, it is I, Caleb; open the door quickly."

"But is it you in very blood and body? For I would sooner face fifty deevils as my maister's ghaist, or even his wraith,—wherefore aroint ye, if ye were ten times my master, unless ye come in bodily shape, lith and limb."

"It is I, you old fool," answered Ravenswood, "in bodily shape, and alive, save that I am half dead with cold."

The light at the upper window disappeared, and glancing from loop-hole to loop-hole in slow succession, gave intimation that the bearer was in the act of descending with great deliberation, a winding staircase occupying one of the turrets which graced the angles of the old tower. The tardiness of his descent extracted some exclamations of impatience from Ravenswood, and several oaths from his less patient and more mercurial companion. Caleb again paused ere he unbolted the door, and once more asked, if they were men of mould that demanded entrance at this time of night?"

"Were I near you, you old fool," said Bucklaw, "I would give you sufficient proofs of my bodily condition."

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"Open the gate, Caleb," said his master, in a more soothing tone, partly from his regard to the ancient and faithful seneschal, partly perhaps because he thought that angry words would be thrown away, so long as Caleb had a stout iron-clenched oaken door betwixt his person and the speakers.

At length Caleb, with a trembling hand, undid the bars, opened the heavy door, and stood before them, exhibiting his thin grey hairs, bald forehead, and sharp high features, illuminated by a quivering lamp which he held in one hand, while he shaded and protected its flame with the other. The timorous courteous glance which he threw around him—the effect of the partial light upon his white hair and illumined features, might have made a good painting; but our travellers were too impatient for security against the rising storm, to permit them to indulge themselves in studying the picturesque. "Is it you, my dear master? is it you yourself, indeed?" exclaimed the old domestic. "I am wae ye suld hae stude waiting at your ain gate; but wha wad hae thought o' seeing ye sae sune, and a strange gentleman with a—(here he exclaimed apart as it were, and to some inmate of the tower, in a voice not meant to be heard by those in the court)—Mysie—Mysie woman, stir for dear life, and get the fire mended; take the auld three-legged stool, or ony thing that's readiest that will make a lowe.—I doubt we are but puirly provided, no expecting ye this some months, when doubtless ye wad hae been received conform till your rank, as gude right is; but natheless"——

"Natheless, Caleb," said the Master, "we must have our horses put up, and ourselves too, the best way we can. I hope you are not sorry to see me sooner than you expected?"

"Sorry, my lord!—I am sure ye sall aye be my lord wi' honest folk, as your noble ancestors hae been these three hundred years, and never asked a whig's leave.—Sorry to see the Lord of Ravenswood at ane o' his ain castles!—(Then again apart to his unseen associate behind the screen)—Mysie, kill the brood-hen without think-

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ing twice on it, let them care that come ahint.—No to say it's our best dwelling," he added, turning to Bucklaw; "but just a strength for the Lord of Ravenswood to flee until,—that is, no to *flee*, but to retreat until in troublous times, like the present, when it was ill convenient for him to live farther in the country in ony of his better and mair principal manors; but, for its antiquity, maist folk think that the outside of Wolf's Crag is worthy of a large perusal."

"And you are determined we shall have time to make it," said Ravenswood, somewhat amused with the shifts the old man used to detain them without doors, until his confederate Mysie had made her preparations within.

"O, never mind the outside of the house, my good friend," said Bucklaw; "let's see the inside, and let our horses see the stable, that's all."

"O yes, sir—ay, sir,—unquestionably, sir—my lord and ony of his honourable companions"——

"But our horses, my old friend—our horses; they will be dead-foundered by standing here in the cold after riding hard, and mine is too good to be spoiled; therefore, once more, our horses," exclaimed Bucklaw.

"True—ay—your horses—yes—I will call the grooms;" and sturdily did Caleb roar till the old tower rang again, "John—William—Saunders!—The lads are gane out, or sleeping," he observed, after pausing for an answer, which he knew that he had no human chance of receiving. "A' gaes wrang when the Master's out by; but I'll take care o' your cattle mysell."

"I think you had better," said Ravenswood, "otherwise I see little chance of their being attended to at all."

"Whisht, my lord,—whisht, for God's sake," said Caleb, in an imploring tone, and apart to his master; "if ye dinna regard your ain credit, think on mine; we'll hae hard eneugh wark to mak a decent night o't, wi' a' the lees I can tell."

"Well, well, never mind," said his master; "go to the stable. There is hay and corn, I trust?"

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"Ou ay, plenty of hay and corn;" this was uttered boldly and aloud, and, in a lower tone, "there was some half fous o' aits, and some taits o' meadow-hay, left after the burial."

"Very well," said Ravenswood, taking the lamp from his domestic's unwilling hand, "I will show the stranger up stairs myself."

"I canna think o' that, my lord;—if ye wad but have five minutes, or ten minutes, or, at maist, a quarter of an hour's patience, and look at the fine moonlight prospect of the Bass and North-Berwick Law till I sort the horses, I would marshal ye up, as reason is ye suld be marshalled, your lordship and your honourable visiter. And I hae lockit up the siller candlesticks, and the lamp is not fit"——

"It will do very well in the meantime," said Ravenswood, "and you will have no difficulty for want of light in the stable, for, if I recollect, half the roof is off."

"Very true, my lord," replied the trusty adherent, and with ready wit instantly added, "and the lazy sclater loons have never come to put it on a' this while, your lordship."

"If I were disposed to jest at the calamities of my house," said Ravenswood, as he led the way up stairs, "poor old Caleb would furnish me with ample means. His passion consists in representing things about our miserable *menage*, not as they are, but as, in his opinion, they ought to be; and, to say the truth, I have been often diverted with the poor wretch's expedients to supply what he thought was essential for the credit of the family, and his still more generous apologies for the want of those articles for which his ingenuity could discover no substitute. But though the tower is none of the largest, I shall have some trouble without him to find the apartment in which there is a fire."

As he spoke thus, he opened the door of the hall. "Here, at least," he said "there is neither hearth nor harbour."

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It was indeed a scene of desolation. A large vaulted room, the beams of which, combined like those of Westminster-Hall, were rudely carved at the extremities, remained nearly in the situation in which it had been left after the entertainment at Allan Lord Ravenswood's funeral. Overturned pitchers, and black jacks, and pewter stoups, and flagons, still cumbered the large oaken table; glasses, those more perishable implements of conviviality, many of which had been voluntarily sacrificed by the guests in their enthusiastic pledges to favourite toasts, strewed the stone floor with their fragments. As for the articles of plate, lent for the purpose by friends and kinsfolk, those had been carefully withdrawn so soon as the ostentatious display of festivity, equally unnecessary and strangely timed, had been made and ended. Nothing, in short, remained that indicated wealth; all the signs were those of recent wastefulness, and present desolation. The black cloth hangings, which on the late mournful occasion, replaced the tattered moth-eaten tapestries, had been partly pulled down, and, dangling from the wall in irregular festoons, disclosed the rough stone-work of the building, unsmoothed either by plaster or the chisel. The seats thrown down, or left in disorder, intimated the careless confusion which had concluded the mournful revel. "This room," said Ravenswood, holding up the lamp—"this room, Mr. Hayston, was riotous when it should have been sad; it is a just retribution that it should now be sad when it ought to be cheerful."

They left this disconsolate apartment, and went up stairs, where, after opening one or two doors in vain, Ravenswood led the way into a little matted anteroom, in which, to their great joy, they found a tolerably good fire, which Mysie, by some such expedient as Caleb had suggested, had supplied with a reasonable quantity of fuel. Glad at the heart to see more of comfort than the castle had yet seemed to offer, Bucklaw rubbed his hands heartily over the fire, and now listened with more complacency to the apologies which the Master of Ravenswood offered. "Comfort," he said, "I cannot provide for

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you, for I have it not for myself; it is long since these walls have known it, if, indeed, they were ever acquainted with it. Shelter and safety, I think, I can promise you."

"Excellent matters, Master," replied Bucklaw, "and, with a mouthful of food and wine, positively all I can require to-night."

"I fear," said the Master, "your supper will be a poor one; I hear the matter in discussion betwixt Caleb and Mysie. Poor Balderston is something deaf, amongst his other accomplishments, so that much of what he means should be spoken aside is overheard by the whole audience, and especially by those from whom he is most anxious to conceal his private manœuvres—Hark!"

They listened, and heard the old domestic's voice in conversation with Mysie to the following effect. "Just mak the best o't, mak the best o't, woman; it's easy to put a fair face on ony thing."

"But the auld brood-hen?—she'll be as teugh as bow-strings and bend-leather!"

"Say ye made a mistake—say ye made a mistake," Mysie!" replied the faithful seneschal, in a soothing and undertoned voice; "tak it a' on yoursell; never let the credit o' the house suffer."

"But the brood-hen," remonstrated Mysie,—"ou she's sitting some gate aneath the dais in the hall, and I am feared to gae in in the dark for the bogle; and if I didna see the bogle, I could as ill see the hen, for it's pit-mirk, and there's no another light in the house, save that very blessed lamp whilk the Master has in his ain hand. And if I had the hen, she's to pu', and to draw, and to dress; how can I do that, and them sitting by the only fire we have?"

"Weel, weel, Mysie," said the butler, "bide ye there a wee, and I'll try to get the lamp wiled away frae them."

Accordingly, Caleb Balderston entered the apartment, little aware that so much of his by-play had been audible there. "Well, Caleb, my old friend, is there any chance of supper?" said the Master of Ravenswood.

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"*Chance* of supper, your lordship?" said Caleb, with an emphasis of strong scorn at the implied doubt,—"how should there be ony question of that, and us in your lordship's house?—Chance of supper, indeed!—But ye'll no be for butcher-meat? There's walth o' fat poultry, ready either for spit or brander—The fat capon, Mysie," he added, calling out as boldly as if such a thing had been in existence.

"Quite unnecessary," said Bucklaw, who deemed himself bound in courtesy to relieve some part of the anxious butler's perplexity, "if you have anything cold, or a morsel of bread."

"The best of bannocks!" exclaimed Caleb, much relieved; "and, for cauld meat, a' that we hae is cauld eneugh,—howbeit maist of the cauld meat and pastry was gien to the poor folk after the ceremony of interment, as gude reason was; nevertheless"——

"Come, Caleb," said the Master of Ravenswood, "I must cut this matter short. This is the young Laird of Bucklaw; he is under hiding, and therefore you know"—

"He'll be nae nicer than your lordship's honour, I'se warrant," answered Caleb, cheerfully, with a nod of intelligence; "I am sorry that the gentleman is under distress, but I am blithe that he canna say muckle again our housekeeping, for I believe his ain pinches may match ours;—no that we are pinched, thank God," he added, retracting the admission which he had made in his first burst of joy, "but nae doubt we are waur aff than we hae been, or suld be. And for eating,—what signifies telling a lee? there's just the hinder end of the mutton-ham that has been but three times on the table, and the nearer the bane the sweeter, as your honours weel ken; and—there's the heel of the ewe-milk kebbuck, wi' a bit of nice butter, and—and—that's a' that's to trust to." And with great alacrity he produced his slender stock of provisions and placed them with much formality upon a small round table betwixt the two gentlemen, who were not deterred either by the homely quality or limited quantity of the repast from doing it full justice. Caleb, in the mean-

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while waited on them with grave officiousness, as if anxious to make up, by his own respectful assiduity, for the want of all other attendance.

But alas! how little on such occasions can form, however anxiously and scrupulously observed, supply the lack of substantial fare! Bucklaw, who had eagerly eaten a considerable portion of the thrice sacked mutton-ham, now began to demand ale.

"I wadna just presume to recommend our ale," said Caleb; "the maut was ill made, and there was awfu' thunner last week; but siccan water as the tower well has, ye'll seldom see, Bucklaw, and that I'se engage for."

"But if your ale is bad you can let us have some wine," said Bucklaw, making a grimace at the mention of the pure element which Caleb so earnestly recommended.

"Wine?" answered Caleb undauntedly, "eneugh of wine; it was but twa days syne—waes me for the cause—there was as much wine drunk in this house as would have floated a pinnace. There never was lack of wine at Wolf's Crag."

"Do fetch us some then," said his master, "instead of talking about it." And Caleb boldly departed.

Every expended butt in the old cellar did he set a-tilt, and shake with the desperate expectation of collecting enough of the grounds of claret to fill the large pewter measure which he carried in his hand. Alas! each had been too devoutly drained; and, with all the squeezing and manœuvring which his craft as a butler suggested, he could only collect about half a quart that seemed presentable. Still, however, Caleb was too good a general to renounce the field without a stratagem to cover his retreat. He undauntedly threw down an empty flagon, as if he had stumbled at the entrance of the apartment; called upon Mysie to wipe up the wine that had never been spilt, and placing the other vessel on the table, hoped there was still enough left for their honours. There was indeed; for even Bucklaw, a sworn friend to the grape, found no encouragement to renew his first attack upon

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the vintage of Wolf's Crag, but contented himself, however reluctantly, with a draught of fair water. Arrangements were now made for his repose; and as the secret chamber was assigned for this purpose, it furnished Caleb with a first-rate and most plausible apology for all deficiencies of furniture, bedding, &c.

"For wha," said he, "would have thought of the secret chaumer being needed? it has not been used since the time of the Gowrie Conspiracy, and I durst never let a woman ken of the entrance to it, or your honour will allow that it wad not hae been a secret chaumer lang."

CHAPTER VIII.

The hearth in hall was black and dead,
No board was dight in bower within,
Nor merry bowl nor welcome bed;
"Here's sorry cheer," quoth the Heir of Linne.
Old Ballad.

THE feelings of the prodigal Heir of Linne, as expressed in that excellent old song, when, after dissipating his whole fortune, he found himself the deserted inhabitant of "the lonely lodge," might perhaps have some resemblance to those of the Master of Ravenswood in his deserted mansion of Wolf's Crag. The Master, however, had this advantage over the spendthrift in the legend, that if he was in similar distress, he could not impute it to his own imprudence. His misery had been bequeathed to him by his father, and, joined to his high blood, and to a title which the courteous might give, or the churlish withhold at their pleasure, it was the whole inheritance he had derived from his ancestry.

Perhaps this melancholy, yet consolatory reflection crossed the mind of the unfortunate young nobleman with a breathing of comfort. Favourable to calm reflec-

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tion, as well as to the Muses, the morning, while it dispelled the shades of night, had a composing and sedative effect upon the stormy passions by which the Master of Ravenswood had been agitated on the preceding day. He now felt himself able to analyze the different feelings by which he was agitated, and much resolved to combat and to subdue them. The morning, which had arisen calm and bright, gave a pleasant effect even to the waste moorland view which was seen from the castle on looking to the landward; and the glorious ocean, crisped with a thousand rippling waves of silver, extended on the other side in awful yet complacent majesty to the verge of the horizon. With such scenes of calm sublimity the human heart sympathizes even in its most disturbed moods, and deeds of honour and virtue are inspired by their majestic influence.

To seek out Bucklaw in the retreat which he had afforded him was the first occupation of the Master, after he had performed, with a scrutiny unusually severe, the important task of self-examination. "How now, Bucklaw?" was his morning salutation—"how like you the couch in which the exiled Earl of Angus once slept in security, when he was pursued by the full energy of a king's resentment?".

"Umph!" returned the sleeper awakened; "I have little to complain of where so great a man was quartered before me, only the mattress was of the hardest, the vault somewhat damp, the rats rather more mutinous than I would have expected from the state of Caleb's larder; and if there had been shutters to that grated window, or a curtain to the bed, I should think it, upon the whole, an improvement in your accommodations."

"It is, to be sure, forlorn enough," said the Master, looking around the small vault; "but if you will rise and leave it, Caleb will endeavour to find you a better breakfast than your supper of last night."

"Pray, let it be no better," said Bucklaw, getting up and endeavouring to dress himself as well as the obscuri-

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ty of the place would permit,—" let it, I say, be no better, if you mean me to persevere in my proposed reformation. The very recollection of Caleb's beverage has done more to suppress my longing to open the day with a morning-draught than twenty sermons would have done. And you, Master,——have you been able to give battle valiantly to your bosom-snake? You see I am in the way of smothering my vipers one by one."

" I have commenced the battle, at least, Bucklaw, and I have had a fair vision of an angel who descended to my assistance," replied the Master.

" Woes me !" said his guest, " no vision can I expect, unless my aunt, Lady Girnington, should betake herself to the tomb; and then it would be the substance of her heritage rather than the appearance of her phantom that I should consider as the support of my good resolutions. But this same breakfast, Master,—does the deer that is to make the pasty run yet on foot, as the ballad has it ?"

" I will inquire into that matter," said his entertainer; and, leaving the apartment, he went in search of Caleb, whom, after some difficulty, he found in an obscure sort of dungeon, which had been in former times the buttery of the castle. Here the old man was employed busily in the doubtful task of burnishing a pewter flagon until it should take the hue and semblance of silver-plate. " I think it may do—I think it might pass, if they winna bring it ower muckle in the light o' the window !" were the ejaculations which he muttered from time to time as if to encourage himself in his undertaking, when he was interrupted by the voice of his master. " Take this," said the Master of Ravenswood, " and get what is necessary for the family." And with these words he gave to the old butler the purse which had on the preceding evening so narrowly escaped the fangs of Craigengelt. The old man shook his silvery and thin locks, and looked with an expression of the most heartfelt anguish at his master as he weighed in his hand the slender treasure, and said in a sorrowful voice, " And is this a' that's left ?"

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"All that is left at present," said the Master, affecting more cheerfulness than perhaps he really felt, "is just the green purse and the wee pickle gowd, as the old song says; but we shall do better one day, Caleb."

"Before that day comes," said Caleb, "I doubt there will be an end of an auld sang, and an auld serving-man to boot. But it disna become me to speak that gate to your honour, and you looking sae pale. Tak back the purse, and keep it to be making a show before company; for if your honour would just tak a bidding, and be whiles taking it out afore folk and putting it up again, there's naebody would refuse us trust, for a' that's come and gane yet."

"But, Caleb," said the Master, "I still intend to leave this country very soon, and desire to do so, with the reputation of an honest man, leaving no debt behind me, at least of my own contracting."

"And gude right ye suld gang away as a true man, and so ye shall; for auld Caleb can tak the wyte of whatever is ta'en on for the house, and then it will be a' just ae man's burden; and I will live just as weel in the tolbooth as out of it, and the credit of the family will be a' safe and sound."

The Master endeavoured, in vain, to make Caleb comprehend, that the butler's incurring the responsibility of debts in his own person, would rather add to than remove the objections which he had to their being contracted. He spoke to a premier, too busy in devising ways and means to puzzle himself with refuting the arguments offered against their justice or expediency.

"There's Eppie Sma'trash will trust us for ale," said Caleb to himself; "she has lived a' her life under the family—and may be wi' a soup brandy—I canna say for wine—she is but a lone woman, and gets her claret by a rundlet at a time—but I'll work a wee drap out o' her by fair means or foul. For doos, there's the doo-cot—there will be poultry amang the tenants, though Luckie Chirnside says she has paid the kain twice ower. We'll mak shift, an it like your honour—we'll mak shift—keep your

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heart abune, for the house sall haud its credit as lang as auld Caleb is to the fore."

The entertainment which the old man's exertions of various kinds enabled him to present to the young gentlemen for three or four days was certainly of no splendid description, but it may readily be believed it was set before no critical guests; and even the distresses, excuses, evasions, and shifts of Caleb, afforded amusement to the young men, and added a sort of interest to the scrambling and irregular style of their table. They had indeed occasion to seize on every circumstance that might serve to diversify or enliven time, which otherwise passed away so heavily.

Bucklaw, shut out from his usual field-sports and joyous carouses by the necessity of remaining concealed within the walls of the castle, became a joyless and uninteresting companion. When the Master of Ravenswood would no longer fence or play at shovel-board—when he himself had polished to the extremity the coat of his palfrey with brush, curry-comb, and hair-cloth—when he had seen him eat his provender, and gently lie down in his stall, he could hardly help envying the animal's apparent acquiescence in a life so monotonous. "The stupid brute," he said, "thinks neither of the race-ground nor the hunting-field, nor his green paddock at Bucklaw, but enjoys himself as comfortably when haltered to the rack in this ruinous vault, as if he had been foaled in it; and I, who have the freedom of a prisoner at large, to range through the dungeons of this wretched old tower, can hardly, betwixt whistling and sleeping, contrive to pass away the hour till dinner-time."

And with this disconsolate reflection he wended his way to the bartizan or battlements of the tower, to watch what objects might appear on the distant moor, or to pelt, with pebbles and pieces of lime, the sea-mews and cormorants which established themselves incautiously within the reach of an idle young man.

Ravenswood, with a mind incalculably deeper and more powerful than that of his companion, had his own

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anxious subjects of reflection, which wrought for him the same unhappiness that sheer ennui and want of occupation inflicted on his companion. The first sight of Lucy Ashton had been less impressive than her image proved to be upon reflection. As the depth and violence of that revengeful passion, by which he had been actuated in seeking an interview with the father, began to abate by degrees, he looked back on his conduct towards the daughter as harsh and unworthy towards a female of rank and beauty. Her looks of grateful acknowledgment, her words of affectionate courtesy, had been repelled with something which approached to disdain; and if the Master of Ravenswood had sustained wrongs at the hand of Sir William Ashton, his conscience told him they had been unhandsomely resented towards his daughter. When his thoughts took this turn of self-reproach, the recollection of Lucy Ashton's beautiful features, rendered yet more interesting by the circumstances in which their meeting had taken place, made an impression upon his mind at once soothing and painful. The sweetness of her voice, the delicacy of her expressions, the vivid glow of her filial affection, embittered his regret at having repulsed her gratitude with rudeness, while, at the same time, they placed before his imagination a picture of the most seducing sweetness.

Even young Ravenswood's strength of moral feeling and rectitude of purpose at once increased the danger of cherishing these recollections, and the propensity to entertain them. Firmly resolved as he was to subdue, if possible, the predominating vice in his character, he admitted with willingness—nay, he summoned up in his imagination, the ideas by which it could be most powerfully counteracted; and, while he did so, a sense of his own harsh conduct towards the daughter of his enemy naturally induced him, as if by way of recompense, to invest her with more of grace and beauty than perhaps she could actually claim.

Had any one at this period told the Master of Ravenswood that he had so lately vowed vengeance against the whole lineage of him whom he considered, not unjustly

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as author of his father's ruin and death, he might at first have repelled the charge as a foul calumny; yet upon serious self-examination, he would have been compelled to admit, that it had, at one period, some foundation in truth, though, according to the present tone of his sentiments, it was difficult to believe that this had really been the case.

There already existed in his bosom two contradictory passions,—a desire to revenge the death of his father, strangely qualified by admiration of his enemy's daughter. Against the former feeling he had struggled, until it seemed to him upon the wane; against the latter he used no means of resistance, for he did not suspect its existence. That this was actually the case, was chiefly evinced by his resuming his resolution to leave Scotland. Yet, though such was his purpose, he remained day after day at Wolf's Crag, without taking measures for carrying it into execution. It is true, that he had written to one or two kinsmen, who resided in a distant quarter of Scotland, and particularly to the Marquis of A——, intimating his purpose; and when pressed upon the subject by Bucklaw, he was wont to allege the necessity of waiting for their reply, especially that of the Marquis, before taking so decisive a measure.

The Marquis was rich and powerful; and although he was suspected to entertain sentiments unfavourable to the government established at the Revolution, he had nevertheless address enough to head a party in the Scottish Privy Council, connected with the high church faction in England, and powerful enough to menace those to whom the Lord Keeper adhered, with a probable subversion of their power. The consulting with a personage of such importance was a plausible excuse, which Ravenswood used to Bucklaw, and probably to himself, for continuing his residence at Wolf's Crag; and it was rendered yet more so by a general report which began to be current, of a probable change of ministers and measures in the Scottish administration. These rumours, strongly asserted by some, and as resolutely denied by others, as their

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wishes or interest dictated, found their way even to the ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, chiefly through the medium of Caleb the butler, who, among his other excellences, was an ardent politician, and seldom made an excursion from the old fortress to the neighbouring village of Wolf's-hope, without bringing back what tidings were current in the vicinity.

But if Bucklaw could not offer any satisfactory objections to the delay of the Master in leaving Scotland, he did not the less suffer with impatience the state of inaction to which it confined him, and it was only the ascendancy which his new companion had acquired over him, that induced him to submit to a course of life so alien to his habits and inclinations.

"You were wont to be thought a stirring active young fellow, Master," was his frequent remonstrance; "yet here you seem determined to live on and on like a rat in a hole, with this trifling difference, that the wiser vermin chooses a hermitage where he can find food at least; but as for us, Caleb's excuses become longer as his diet turns more spare, and I fear we shall realize the stories they tell of the sloth,—we have almost eat up the last green leaf on the plant, and have nothing left for it but to drop from the tree and break our necks."

"Do not fear it," said Ravenswood; "there is a fate watches for us, and we too have a stake in the revolution, that is now impending, and which already has alarmed many a bosom."

"What fate—what revolution?" inquired his companion. "We have had one revolution too much already, I think."

Ravenswood interrupted him by putting into his hands a letter.

"O," answered Bucklaw, "my dream's out—I thought I heard Caleb this morning pressing some unfortunate fellow to a drink of cold water, and assuring him it was better for his stomach in the morning than ale or brandy."

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"It was my Lord of A——'s courier," said Ravenswood, "who was doomed to experience his ostentatious hospitality, which I believe ended in sour beer and herrings—Read, and you will see the news he has brought us."

"I will as fast as I can," said Bucklaw; "but I am no great clerk, nor does his lordship seem to be the first of scribes."

The reader will peruse, in a few seconds, by the aid of our friend Ballantyne's types, what took Bucklaw a good half hour in perusal, though assisted by the Master of Ravenswood. The tenor was as follows:—

"*Right Honourable our Cousin,*

"Our hearty commendations premised, these come to assure you of the interest which we take in your welfare, and in your purposes towards its augmentation. If we have been less active in showing forth our effective good will towards you, than, as a loving kinsman and blood-relative, we would willingly have desired, we request that you will impute it to lack of opportunity to show our good liking, not to any coldness of our will. Touching your resolution to travel in foreign parts, as at this time we hold the same little advisable, in respect that your ill-willers may, according to the custom of such persons, impute motives for your journey, whereof, although we know and believe you to be as clear as ourselves, yet natheless their words may find credence in places where the belief in them may much prejudice you, and which we should see with more unwillingness and displeasure than with means of remedy.

"Having thus, as becometh our kindred, given you our poor mind on the subject of your journeying forth of Scotland, we would willing add reasons of weight, which might materially advantage you and your father's house, thereby to determine you to abide at Wolf's Crag, until this harvest season shall be passed over. But what sayeth the proverb, *verbum sapienti*,—a word is more to him that hath wisdom than a sermon to a fool. And albeit

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we have written this poor scroll with our own hand, and are well assured of the fidelity of our messenger, as him that is many ways bounden to us, yet so it is, that slidd-ery ways crave wary walking, and that we may not peril upon paper matters which we would gladly impart to you by word of mouth. Wherefore, it was our purpose to have prayed you heartily to come to this our barren High-land country to kill a stag, and to treat of the matters which we are now more painfully inditing to you anent. But commodity does not serve at present for such our meeting, which, therefore, shall be deferred until sic time as we may in all mirth rehearse those things whereof we now keep silence. Meantime, we pray you to think that we are, and will still be, your good kinsman and well wisher, waiting but for times of whilk we do, as it were, entertain a twilight prospect, and appear and hope to be also your effectual well-doer. And in which hope we heartily write ourself,

Right honourable,

Your loving cousin, A——."

Given from our poor

house of B——, &c.

Superscribed—"For the right honourable, and our honoured kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood—These, with haste, haste, post-haste—ride and run until these be delivered."

"What think you of this epistle, Bucklaw?" said the Master, when his companion had hammered out all the sense, and almost all the words of which it consisted."

"Truly, that the Marquis's meaning is as great a riddle as his manuscript. He is really in much need of Wit's Interpreter, or the Complete Letter-Writer, and were I you, I would send him a copy by the bearer. He writes you very kindly to remain wasting your time and your money in this vile, stupid, oppressed country, without so much as offering you the countenance and shelter of his house. In my opinion, he has some scheme in view in

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which he supposes you can be useful, and he wishes to keep you at hand, to make use of you when it ripens, reserving the power of turning you adrift, should his plot fail in the concoction."

"His plot?—then you suppose it is a treasonable business," answered Ravenswood.

"What else can it be?" replied Bucklaw; "the Marquis has been long suspected to have an eye to Saint Germains."

"He should not engage me rashly in such an adventure," said Ravenswood; "when I recollect the times of the first and second Charles, and of the last James, truly I see little reason, that, as a man or a patriot, I should draw my sword for their descendants."

"Humph!" replied Bucklaw; "so you have set yourself down to mourn over the crop-eared dogs, whom honest Claverse treated as they deserved?"

"They first gave the dogs an ill name, and then hanged them," replied Ravenswood. "I hope to see the day when justice shall be open to Whig and Tory, and when these nick-names shall only be used among coffee-house politicians, as slut and jade are among apple-women, as cant terms of idle spite and rancour."

"That will not be in our days, Master—the iron has entered too deeply into our sides and our souls."

"It will be, however, one day," replied the Master; "men will not always start at these nick-names as at a trumpet-sound. As social life is better protected, its comforts will become too dear to be hazarded without some better reason than speculative politics."

"It is fine talking," answered Bucklaw; "but my heart is with the old song,—

> "To see good corn upon the rigs,
> And a gallows built to hang the Whigs,
> And the right restored where the right should be,
> O that is the thing that would wanton me."

"You may sing as loudly as you will, *cantabit vacuus*," —answered the Master; "but I believe the Marquis is

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too wise, at least too wary, to join you in such a burden. I suspect he alludes to a revolution in the Scottish Privy-council, rather than in the British kingdoms."

"O, confusion to your state-tricks!" exclaimed Bucklaw, "your cold calculating manœuvres, which old gentlemen in wrought night-caps and furred gowns execute like so many games at chess, and displace a treasurer or lord commissioner as they would take a rook or a pawn. Tennis for my sport, and battle for my earnest! My racket and my sword for my plaything and bread-winner! And you, Master, so deep and considerate as you would seem, you have that within you makes the blood boil faster than suits your present humour of moralizing on political truths. You are one of those wise men who see every thing with great composure till their blood is up, and then —woe to any one who should put them in mind of their own prudential maxims!"

"Perhaps," said Ravenswood, "you read me more rightly than I can myself. But to think justly will certainly go some length in helping me to act so. But hark! I hear Caleb tolling the dinner-bell."

"Which he always does with the more sonorous grace, in proportion to the meagreness of the cheer which he has provided," said Bucklaw, "as if that infernal clang and jangle, which will one day bring the belfry down the cliff, could convert a starved hen into a fat capon, and a blade-bone of mutton into a haunch of venison."

"I wish we may be so well off as your worst conjectures surmise, Bucklaw, from the extreme solemnity and ceremony with which Caleb seems to place on the table that solitary covered dish."

"Uncover, Caleb! uncover, for Heaven's sake!" said Bucklaw; "let us have what you can give us without preface—why it stands well enough, man," he continued, addressing impatiently the ancient butler, who, without reply, kept shifting the dish, until he had at length placed it with mathematical precision in the very midst of the table

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"What have we got here, Caleb?" inquired the Master in his turn.

"Ahem! sir, ye suld have known before; but his honour the Laird of Bucklaw is so impatient," answered Caleb, still holding the dish with one hand, and the cover with the other, with evident reluctance to disclose the contents.

"But what is it, a God's name—not a pair of clean spurs, I hope, in the Border fashion of old times?"

"Ahem! ahem!" reiterated Caleb, "your honour is pleased to be facetious—natheless I might presume to say it was a convenient fashion, and used, as I have heard, in an honourable and thriving family. But touching your present dinner, I judged that this being Saint Magdalen's Eve, who was a worthy Queen of Scotland in her day, your honours might judge it decorous, if not altogether to fast, yet only to sustain nature with some slight refection, as ane saulted herring or the like." And, uncovering the dish, he displayed four of the savoury fishes which he mentioned, adding, in a subdued tone, "that they were no just common herring neither, being every ane melters, and sauted with uncommon care by the housekeeper (poor Mysie) for his honour's especial use."

"Out upon all apologies!" said the Master, "let us eat the herrings since there is nothing better to be had—but I begin to think with you, Bucklaw, that we are consuming the last green leaf, and that, in spite of the Marquis's political machinations, we must positively shift camp for want of forage, without waiting the issue of them."

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CHAPTER IX.

Ay, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
And from its covert starts the fearful prey,
Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,
Would, like a lifeless clod outstretched lie,
Shut out from all the fair creation offers ?

Ethwald, Act I. Scene I.

Light meals procure light slumbers ; and therefore it is not surprising, that, considering the fare which Caleb's conscience, or his necessity, assuming, as will sometimes happen, that disguise, had assigned to the guests of Wolf's Crag, their slumbers should have been short.

In the morning Bucklaw rushed into his host's apartment with a loud halloo, which might have awaked the dead.

" Up ! up ! in the name of Heaven—the hunters are out, the only piece of sport I have seen this month ; and you lie here, Master, on a bed that has little to recommend it, except that it may be something softer than the stone floor of your ancestors' vault."

" I wish," said Ravenswood, raising his head peevishly, " you had forborne so early a jest, Mr. Hayston—it is really no pleasure to lose the very short repose which I had just begun to enjoy, after a night spent in thoughts upon fortune far harder than my couch, Bucklaw."

" Pshaw ! pshaw !" replied his guest ; " get up—get up—the hounds are abroad—I have saddled the horses myself, for old Caleb was calling for grooms and lacqueys, and would never have proceeded without two hours' apology, for the absence of men that were a hundred miles off—Get up, Master—I say the hounds are out—get up, I say—the hunt is up." And off ran Bucklaw.

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"And I say," said the Master, rising slowly, "that nothing can concern me less. Whose hounds come so near to us?"

"The Honourable Lord Bittlebrains'," answered Caleb, who had followed the impatient Laird of Bucklaw into his master's bed-room, "and truly I ken nae title they have to be yowling and howling within the freedoms and immunities of your lordship's right of free forestry."

"Nor I, Caleb," replied Ravenswood, "excepting that they have bought both the lands and the right of forestry, and may think themselves entitled to exercise the rights they have paid their money for."

"It may be sae, my lord," replied Caleb; "but it's no gentleman's deed of them to come here and exercise such like right, and your lordship living at your ain castle of Wolf's Crag. Lord Bittlebrains would do weel to remember what his folk have been."

"And we what we now are," said the Master, with suppressed bitterness of feeling. "But reach me my cloak, Caleb, and I will indulge Bucklaw with a sight of this chase. It is selfish to sacrifice my guest's pleasure to my own."

"Sacrifice!" echoed Caleb, in a tone, which seemed to imply the total absurdity of his master making the least concession in deference to any one—"Sacrifice indeed!—but I crave your honour's pardon—and whilk doublet is it your pleasure to wear?"

"Any one you will, Caleb—my wardrobe, I suppose, is not very extensive."

"Not extensive!" echoed his assistant; "when there is the grey and silver that your lordship bestowed on Hew Hildebrand, your out-rider—and the French velvet that went with my lord your father (be gracious to him)—my lord your father's auld wardrobe to the puir friends of the family, and the drap-de-berry"——

"Which I gave to you, Caleb, and which, I suppose, is the only dress we have any chance to come at, except that I wore yesterday—pray, hand me that, and say no more about it."

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"If your honour has a fancy," replied Caleb, "and doubtless it's a sad-coloured suit, and you are in mourning—nevertheless I have never tried on the drap-de-berry—ill wad it become me—and your honour having no change of claiths at this present—and it's weel brushed, and as there are leddies down yonder"—

"Ladies!" said Ravenswood; "and what ladies, pray?"

"What do I ken, your lordship?—looking down at hem from the warden's tower, I could but see them glent by wi' their bridles ringing, and their feathers fluttering, like the court of Elfland."

"Well, well, Caleb," replied the Master, "help me on with my cloak, and hand me my sword-belt.—What clatter is that in the court-yard?"

"Just Bucklaw bringing out the horses," said Caleb, after a glance through the window, "as if there werena men eneugh in the castle, or as if I couldna serve the turn of ony o' them that are out o' the gate."

"Alas! Caleb, we should want little, if your ability were equal to your will," replied his master.

"And I hope your lordship disna want that muckle," said Caleb; "for, considering a' things, I trust we support the credit of the family as weel as things will permit of,—only Bucklaw is aye sae frank and sae forward.—And there he has brought out your lordship's palfrey, without the saddle being decored wi' the broidered sumpter-cloth! and I could have brushed it in a minute."

"It is all very well," said his master, escaping from him, and descending the narrow and steep winding staircase, which led to the court-yard.

"It *may* be a' very weel," said Caleb, somewhat peevishly; "but if your lordship wad tarry a bit, I will tell you what will *not* be very weel."

"And what is that?" said Ravenswood, impatiently, but stopping at the same time.

"Why, just that ye suld speer ony gentleman hame to dinner; for I canna mak anither fast on a feast day, as when I cam ower Bucklaw wi' queen Margaret—and, to speak truth, if your lordship wad but please to cast your-

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sell in the way of dining wi' Lord Bittlebrains, I'se warrand I wad cast about brawly for the morn ; or if, stead o' that, ye wad but dine wi' them at the Change-house, ye might mak your shift for the lawing ; ye might say ye had forgot your purse—or that the carline awed ye rent, and that ye wad allow it in the settlement."

" Or any other lie that came uppermost, I suppose?" said his master. " Good by, Caleb ; I commend your care for the honour of the family." And, throwing himself on his horse, he followed Bucklaw, who, at the manifest risk of his neck, had begun to gallop down the steep path which led from the tower, as soon as he saw Ravenswood have his foot in the stirrup.

Caleb Balderstone looked anxiously after them, and shook his thin grey locks—" And I trust they will come to no evil—but they have reached the plain, and folk cannot say but that the horse are hearty and in spirits."

Animated by the natural impetuosity and fire of his temper, young Bucklaw rushed on with the careless speed of a whirlwind. Ravenswood was scarce more moderate in his pace, for his was a mind unwillingly roused from contemplative inactivity, but which, when once put into motion, acquired a spirit of forcible and violent progression. Neither was his eagerness proportioned in all cases to the motive of impulse, but might be compared to the speed of a stone, which rushes with like fury down the hill, whether it was first put in motion by the arm of a giant or the hand of a boy. He felt, therefore, in no ordinary degree, the headlong impulse of the chase, a pastime so natural to youth of all ranks, that it seems rather to be an inherent passion in our animal nature, which levels all differences of rank and education, than an acquired habit of rapid exercise.

The repeated bursts of the French horn, which was then always used for the encouragement and direction of the hounds—the deep, though distant baying of the pack —the half-heard cries of the huntsmen—the half-seen forms which were discovered now emerging from glens which crossed the moor, now sweeping over its surface,

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now picking their way where it was impeded by morasses, and, above all, the feeling of his own rapid motion, animated the Master of Ravenswood, at least for the moment, above the recollections of a more painful nature by which he was surrounded. The first thing which recalled him to those unpleasing circumstances was feeling that his horse, notwithstanding all the advantages which he received from his rider's knowledge of the country, was unable to keep up with the chase. As he drew his bridle up with the bitter feeling that his poverty excluded him from the favourite recreation of his forefathers, and indeed their sole employment when not engaged in military pursuits, he was accosted by a well-mounted stranger, who, unobserved, had kept near him during the earlier part of his career.

"Your horse is blown," said the man with a complaisance seldom used in a hunting-field. "Might I crave your honour to make use of mine?"

"Sir," said Ravenswood, more surprised than pleased at such a proposal, "I really do not know how I have merited such a favour at a stranger's hands."

"Never ask a question about it, Master," said Bucklaw, who, with great unwillingness, had hitherto reined in his own gallant steed, not to outride his host and entertainer. "Take the goods the gods provide you, as the great John Dryden says—or stay—here, my friend, lend me that horse; I see you have been puzzled to rein him up this half hour. I'll take the devil out of him for you. Now, Master, do you ride mine, which will carry you like an eagle."

And throwing the rein of his own horse to the Master of Ravenswood, he sprung upon that which the stranger resigned to him, and continued his career at full speed.

"Was ever so thoughtless a being!" said the Master; "and you, my friend, how could you trust him with your horse?"

"The horse," said the man, "belongs to a person who will make your honour, or any of your honourable friends, most welcome to him, flesh and fell"

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"And the owner's name is ——?" asked Ravenswood.

"Your honour must excuse me, you will learn that from himself.—If you please to take your friend's horse, and leave me your galloway, I will meet you after the fall of the stag, for I hear they are blowing him at bay."

"I believe, my friend, it will be the best way to recover your good horse for you," answered Ravenswood; and mounting the nag of his friend Bucklaw, he made all the haste in his power to the spot where the blast of the horn announced that the stag's career was nearly terminated.

These jovial sounds were intermixed with the huntsmen's shouts of "Hyke a Talbot! Hyke a Teviot! now, boys, now!" and similar cheering halloos of the olden hunting-field, to which the impatient yelling of the hounds, now close on the object of their pursuit, gave a lively and unremitting chorus. The straggling riders began now to rally towards the scene of action, collecting from different points as to a common centre.

Bucklaw kept the start which he had gotten, and arrived first at the spot, where the stag, incapable of sustaining a more prolonged flight, had turned upon the hounds, and, in the hunter's phrase was at bay. With his stately head bent down, his sides white with foam, his eyes strained betwixt rage and terror, the hunted animal had now in his turn become an object of intimidation to his pursuers. The hunters came up one by one, and watched an opportunity to assail him with some advantage, which, in such circumstances, can only be done with caution. The dogs stood aloof and bayed loudly, intimating at once eagerness and fear, and each of the sportsmen seemed to expect that his comrade would take upon him the perilous task of assaulting and disabling the animal. The ground, which was a hollow in the common or moor, afforded little advantage for approaching the stag unobserved, and general was the shout of triumph when Bucklaw, with the dexterity proper to an accomplished cavalier of the day, sprang from his horse, and dashing suddenly and swiftly at the stag, brought him to the ground by a cut on the hind leg, with his short hunting sword. The pack rush-

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ing in upon their disabled enemy, soon ended his painful struggles, and solemnized his fall with their clamour—the hunters with their horns and voices whooping and blowing a *mort,* or death-note, which resounded far over the billows of the adjacent ocean.

The huntsman then withdrew the hounds from the throttled stag, and, on his knee, presented his knife to a fair female form, on a white palfrey, whose terror, or perhaps her compassion, had till then kept her at some distance. She wore a black silk riding-mask, which was then a common fashion, as well for preserving the complexion from sun and rain, as from an idea of decorum, which did not permit a lady to appear barefaced, while engaged in a boisterous sport and attended by a promiscuous company. The richness of her dress, however, as well as the mettle and form of her palfrey, together with the sylvan compliment paid to her by the huntsman, pointed her out to Bucklaw as the principal person in the field. It was not without a feeling of pity, approaching even to contempt, that this enthusiastic hunter observed her refuse the huntsman's knife, presented to her for the purpose of making the first incision in the stag's breast, and thereby discovering the quality of the venison. He felt more than half inclined to pay his compliments to her; but it had been Bucklaw's misfortune, that his habits of life had not rendered him familiarly acquainted with the higher and better classes of female society, so that, with all his natural audacity, he felt sheepish and bashful when it became necessary to address a lady of distinction.

Taking unto himself heart of grace (to use his own phrase,) he did at length summon up resolution enough to give the fair huntress good time of the day, and trust that her sport had answered her expectation. Her answer was very courteously and modestly expressed, and testified some gratitude to the gallant cavalier, whose exploit had terminated the chase so adroitly, when the hounds and huntsmen seemed somewhat at a stand.

"Uds daggers and scabbard, madam," said Bucklaw, whom this observation brought at once upon his own

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ground, "there is no difficulty or merit in that matter at all, so that a fellow is not too much afraid of having a pair of antlers in his guts. I have hunted at force five hundred times, madam; and I never yet saw the stag at bay, by land or water, but I durst have gone roundly in on him. It is all use and wont, madam; and I'll tell you, madam, for all that, it must be done with good heed and caution; and you will do well, madam, to have your hunting-sword both right sharp and double-edged, that you may strike either fore-handed or back-handed, as you see reason, for a hurt with a buck's horn is a perilous and somewhat venomous matter."

"I am afraid, sir," said the young lady, and her smile was scarce concealed by her vizard, "I shall have little use for such careful preparation."

"But the gentleman says very right, for all that, my lady," said an old huntsman, who had listened to Bucklaw's harangue with no small edification; "and I have heard my father say, who was a forester at the Cabrach, that a wild boar's gaunch is more easily healed than a hurt from the deer's horn, for so says the old woodman's rhyme,—

'If thou be hurt with horn of hart, it brings thee to thy bier;
But tusk of boar shall leeches heal—thereof have lesser fear.'"

"An I might advise," continued Bucklaw, who was now in his element, and desirous of assuming the whole management, "as the hounds are surbated and weary, the head of the stag should be cabbaged in order to reward them; and if I may presume to speak, the huntsman who is to break up the stag, ought to drink to your good ladyship's health a good lusty bicker of ale, or a tass of brandy; for if he breaks him up without drinking, the venison will not keep well."

This very agreeable prescription received, as will be readily believed, all acceptation from the huntsman, who in requital offered to Bucklaw the compliment of his knife, which the young lady had declined. This polite proffer was seconded by his mistress.

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"I believe, sir," she said, withdrawing herself from the circle, "that my father, for whose amusement Lord Bittlebrains' hounds have been out to-day, will readily surrender all care of these matters to a gentleman of your experience."

Then bending gracefully from her horse, she wished him good morning, and, attended by one or two domestics, who seemed immediately attached to her service, retired from the scene of action, to which Bucklaw, too much delighted with an opportunity of displaying his wood-craft to care about man or woman either, paid little attention; but was soon stript to his doublet, with tucked-up sleeves, and naked arms up to the elbows in blood and grease, slashing, cutting, hacking, and hewing, with the precision of Sir Tristrem himself, and wrangling and disputing with all around him concerning nombles, briskets, flankards, and raven-bones, then usual terms of the art of hunting, or of butchery, whichever the reader chooses to call it, which are now probably antiquated.

When Ravenswood, who followed a short space behind his friend, saw that the stag had fallen, his temporary ardour for the chase gave way to that feeling of reluctance which he endured at encountering in his fallen fortunes the gaze whether of equals or inferiors. He reined up his horse on the top of a gentle eminence, from which he observed the busy and gay scene beneath him, and heard the whoops of the huntsmen gaily mingled with the cry of the dogs, and the neighing and trampling of the horses. But these jovial sounds fell sadly on the ear of the ruined nobleman. The chase, with all its train of excitations, has ever since feudal times been accounted the almost exclusive privilege of the aristocracy, and was anciently their chief employment in times of peace. The sense that he was excluded by his situation from enjoying the sylvan sport, which his rank assigned to him as a special prerogative, and the feeling that new men were now exercising it over the downs, which had been jealously reserved by his ancestors for their own amusement, while

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he, the heir of the domain, was fain to hold himself at a distance from their party, awakened reflections calculated to depress deeply a mind like Ravenswood's, which was naturally contemplative and melancholy. His pride, however, soon shook off this feeling of dejection, and it gave way to impatience upon finding that his volatile friend Bucklaw seemed in no hurry to return with his borrowed steed, which Ravenswood, before leaving the field, wished to see restored to the obliging owner. As he was about to move towards the group of assembled huntsmen, he was joined by a horseman, who like himself had kept aloof during the fall of the deer.

This personage seemed stricken in years. He wore a scarlet cloak, buttoning high upon his face, and his hat was unlooped and slouched, probably by way of defence against the weather. His horse, a strong and steady palfrey, was calculated for a rider who proposed to witness the sport of the day, rather than to share it. An attendant waited at some distance, and the whole equipment was that of an elderly gentleman of rank and fashion. He accosted Ravenswood very politely, but not without some embarrassment.

"You seem a gallant young gentleman, sir," he said, "and yet appear as indifferent to this brave sport as if you had my load of years on your shoulders."

"I have followed the sport with more spirit on other occasions," replied the Master; "at present, late events in my family must be my apology—and besides," he added, "I was but indifferently mounted at the beginning of the sport."

"I think," said the stranger, "one of my attendants had the sense to accommodate your friend with a horse."

"I was much indebted to his politeness and yours," replied Ravenswood. "My friend is Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom I dare say you will be sure to find in the thick of the keenest sportsmen. He will return your servant's horse, and take my pony in exchange—and will add," he concluded, turning his horse's head from the stranger,

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"his best acknowledgments to mine for the accommodation."

The Master of Ravenswood having thus expressed himself, began to move homeward, with the manner of one who has taken leave of his company. But the stranger was not so to be shaken off. He turned his horse at the same time, and rode in the same direction so near to the Master, that, without outriding him, which the formal civility of the time, and the respect due to the stranger's age and recent civility, would have rendered improper, he could not easily escape from his company.

The stranger did not long remain silent. "This then," he said, "is the ancient Castle of Wolf's Crag, often mentioned in the Scottish records," looking to the old tower then darkening under the influence of a stormy cloud, that formed its back ground; for at the distance of a short mile, the chase having been circuitous, had brought the hunters nearly back to the point which they had attained when Ravenswood and Bucklaw had set forward to join them.

Ravenswood answered this observation with a cold and distant assent.

"It was, as I have heard," continued the stranger, unabashed by his coldness, "one of the most early possessions of the honourable family of Ravenswood."

"Their earliest possession," answered the Master, "and probably their latest."

"I—I—I should hope not, sir," answered the stranger, clearing his voice with more than one cough, and making an effort to overcome a certain degree of hesitation,—"Scotland knows what she owes to this ancient family, and remembers their frequent and honourable achievements. I have little doubt, that, were it properly represented to her Majesty that so ancient and noble a family were subjected to dilapidation—I mean to decay —means might be found, *ad re-ædificandum antiquam domum*"——

"I will save you the trouble, sir, of discussing this point farther," said the Master haughtily. "I am the

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heir of that unfortunate House—I am the Master of Ravenswood. And you sir, who seem to be a gentleman of fashion and education, must be sensible, that the next mortification after being unhappy, is the being loaded with undesired commiseration."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the elder horseman—"I did not know—I am sensible I ought not to have mentioned—nothing could be farther from my thoughts than to suppose"——

"There are no apologies necessary, sir," answered Ravenswood, "for here, I suppose, our roads separate, and I assure you that we part in perfect equanimity on my side."

As speaking these words, he directed his horse's head towards a narrow causeway, the ancient approach to Wolf's Crag, of which it might be truly said, in the words of the Bard of Hope, that

> —"Frequented by few was the grass-cover'd road,
> Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode,
> To his hills that encircle the sea."

But, ere he could disengage himself from his companion, the young lady we have already mentioned came up to join the stranger, followed by her servants.

"Daughter," said the stranger to the masked damsel, "this is the Master of Ravenswood."

It would have been natural that the gentleman should have replied to this introduction; but there was something in the graceful form and retiring modesty of the female to whom he was thus presented, which not only prevented him from inquiring to whom, and by whom, the annunciation had been made, but which even for the time struck him absolutely mute. At this moment the cloud which had long lowered above the height on which Wolf's Crag is situated, and which now, as it advanced, spread itself in darker and denser folds both over land and sea, hiding the distant objects and obscuring those which were nearer, turning the sea to a leaden complexion, and the heath to a darker brown, began now, by

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one or two distant peals, to announce the thunders with which it was fraught; while two flashes of lightning, following each other very closely, showed in the distance the grey turrets of Wolf's Crag, and, more nearly, the rolling billows of the ocean, crested suddenly with red and dazzling light.

The horse of the fair huntress showed symptoms of impatience and restiveness, and it became impossible for Ravenswood, as a man or a gentleman, to leave her abruptly to the care of an aged father or her menial attendants. He was, or believed himself, obliged in courtesy to take hold of her bridle, and assist her in managing the unruly animal. While he was thus engaged, the old gentleman observed that the storm seemed to increase—that they were far from Lord Bittlebrains', whose guests they were for the present—and that he would be obliged to the Master of Ravenswood to point him the way to the nearest place of refuge from the storm. At the same time he cast a wistful and embarrassed look towards the Tower of Wolf's Crag, which seemed to render it almost impossible for the owner to avoid offering an old man and a lady, in such an emergency, the temporary use of his house. Indeed, the condition of the young huntress made this courtesy indispensable; for, in the course of the services which he rendered, he could not but perceive that she trembled much, and was extremely agitated, from her apprehensions, doubtless, of the coming storm.

I know not if the Master of Ravenswood shared her terrors, but he was not entirely free from something like a similar disorder of nerves, as he observed, "The Tower of Wolf's Crag has nothing to offer beyond the shelter of its roof, but if that can be acceptable at such a moment"—he paused, as if the rest of the invitation stuck in his throat. But the old gentleman, his self-constituted companion, did not allow him to recede from the invitation, which he had rather suffered to be implied than directly expressed.

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"The storm," said the stranger, "must be an apology for waving ceremony—his daughter's health was weak—she had suffered much from a recent alarm—he trusted their intrusion on the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality would not be altogether unpardonable in the circumstances of the case—his child's safety must be dearer to him than ceremony."

There was no room to retreat. The Master of Ravenswood led the way, continuing to keep hold of the lady's bridle to prevent her horse from starting at some unexpected explosion of thunder. He was not so bewildered in his own hurried reflections, but that he remarked, that the deadly paleness which had occupied her neck and temples, and such of her features as the riding-mask left exposed, gave place to a deep and rosy suffusion; and he felt with embarrassment that a flush was by tacit sympathy excited in his own cheeks. The stranger, with watchfulness which he disguised under apprehensions for the safety of his daughter, continued to observe the expression of the Master's countenance as they ascended the hill to Wolf's Crag. When they stood in front of that ancient fortress, Ravenswood's emotions were of a very complicated description; and as he led the way into the rude court-yard, and halloo'd to Caleb to give attendance, there was a tone of sternness, almost of fierceness, which seemed somewhat alien from the courtesies of one who is receiving honoured guests.

Caleb came; and not the paleness of the fair stranger at the first approach of the thunder, nor the paleness of any other person, in any other circumstances whatever, equalled that which overcame the thin cheeks of the disconsolate seneschal, when he beheld this accession of guests to the castle, and reflected that the dinner hour was fast approaching. "Is he daft?" he muttered to himself,—"is he clean daft a'thegither, to bring lords and leddies, and a host of folk behint them, and twal-o'clock chappit?" Then approaching the Master, he craved pardon for having permitted the rest of his people to go out to see the hunt, observing, that "they wad never

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think of his lordship coming back till mirk night, and that he dreaded they might play the truant."

"Silence, Balderstone!" said Ravenswood sternly; "your folly is unseasonable.—Sir and madam," he said, turning to his guests, "this old man, and a yet older and more imbecile female domestic, form my whole retinue. Our means of refreshing you are more scanty than even so miserable a retinue, and a dwelling so dilapidated, might seem to promise you; but, such as they may chance to be, you may command them."

The elder stranger, struck with the ruined and even savage appearance of the tower, rendered still more disconsolate by the lowering and gloomy sky, and perhaps not altogether unmoved by the grave and determined voice in which their host addressed them, looked round him anxiously, as if he half repented the readiness with which he had accepted the offered hospitality. But there was now no opportunity of receding from the situation in which he had placed himself.

As for Caleb, he was so utterly stunned by his master's public and unqualified acknowledgment of the nakedness of the land, that for two minutes he could only mutter within his hebdomadal beard, which had not felt the razor, for six days, "He's daft—clean daft—red wud, and awa wi't! But deil hae Caleb Balderstone," said he, collecting his powers of invention and resource, "if the family shall lose credit, if he were as mad as the seven wise masters!" He then boldly advanced, and in spite of his master's frowns and impatience, gravely asked, "if he should not serve up some slight refection for the young leddy, and a glass of tokay, or old sack—or"—

"Truce to this ill-timed foolery," said the Master sternly—"put the horses into the stable and interrupt us no more with your absurdities."

"Your honour's pleasure is to be obeyed aboon a' things," said Caleb; "nevertheless, as for the sack and tokay which it is not your noble guests' pleasure to accept"——

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But here the voice of Bucklaw, heard even above the clattering of hoofs and braying of horns with which it mingled, announced that he was scaling the pathway to the tower at the head of the greater part of the gallant hunting train.

"The deil be in me," said Caleb, taking heart in spite of this new invasion of Philistines, "if they shall beat me yet! The hellicat ne'er-dò-weel!—to bring such a crew here, that will expect to find brandy as plenty as ditch-water, and he kenning sae absolutely the case in whilk we stand for the present! But I trow, could I get rid of thae gaping gowks of flunkies that hae won into the court-yard at the back of their betters, as mony a man gets preferment, I could make a' right yet."

The measures which he took to execute this dauntless resolution, the reader shall learn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

With throat unslacked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard him call;
Gramercy they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in
As they had been drinking all!
Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Hayston of Bucklaw was one of the thoughtless class who never hesitate between their friend and their jest. When it was announced that the principal persons of the chase had taken their route towards Wolf's Crag, the huntsmen, as a point of civility, offered to transfer the venison to that mansion, a proffer which was readily accepted by Bucklaw, who thought much of the astonishment which their arrival in full body would occasion poor old Caleb Balderstone, and very little of the dilemma to which he was about to expose his friend the Master, so ill

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circumstanced to receive such a party. But in old Caleb he had to do with a crafty and alert antagonist, prompt at supplying, upon all emergencies, evasions and excuses suitable, as he thought, to the dignity of the family.

"Praise be blessed!" said Caleb to himself, "ae leaf of the muckle gate has been swung to wi' yestreen's wind, and I think I can manage to shut the ither."

But he was desirous, like a prudent governor, at the same time to get rid, if possible, of the internal enemy, in which light he considered almost every one who eat and drank, ere he took measures to exclude those whom their jocund noise now pronounced to be near at hand. He waited, therefore, with impatience until his master had shown his two principal guests into the tower, and then commenced his operations.

"I think," he said to the stranger menials, "that as they are bringing the stag's head to the castle in all honour, we, who are in-dwellers, should receive them at the gate."

The unwary grooms had no sooner hurried out, in compliance with this insidious hint, than, one folding-door of the ancient gate being already closed by the wind, as has been already intimated, honest Caleb lost no time in shutting the other with a clang, which resounded from donjon-vault to battlement. Having thus secured the pass, he forthwith indulged the excluded huntsmen in brief parley, from a small projecting window, or shot-hole, through which, in former days, the warders were wont to reconnoitre those who presented themselves before the gates. He gave them to understand, in a short and pithy speech, that the gate of the Castle was never on any account opened during meal-times—that his honour, the Master of Ravenswood, and some guests of quality, had just sat down to dinner—that there was excellent brandy at the hostler-wife's at Wolf's-hope down below—and he held out some obscure hint that the reckoning would be discharged by the Master; but this was uttered in a very dubious and oracular strain, for, like Louis XIV., Caleb Balderstone hesitated to carry finesse

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so far as direct falsehood, and was content to deceive, if possible, without directly lying.

This annunciation was received with surprise by some, with laughter by others, and with dismay by the expelled lacqueys, who endeavoured to demonstrate that their right of re-admission, for the purpose of waiting upon their master and mistress, was at least indisputable. But Caleb was not in a humour to understand or admit any distinctions. He stuck to his original proposition with that dogged, but convenient pertinacity, which is armed against all conviction and deaf to all reasoning. Bucklaw now came from the rear of the party, and demanded admittance in a very angry tone. But the resolution of Caleb was immovable.

"If the King on the throne were at the gate," he declared, "his ten fingers should never open it contrair to the established use and wont of the family of Ravenswood, and his duty as their head-servant."

Bucklaw was now extremely incensed, and with more oaths and curses than we care to repeat, declared himself most unworthily treated, and demanded peremptorily to speak with the Master of Ravenswood himself. But to this also Caleb turned a deaf ear.

"He's as soon a-bleeze as a tap of tow the lad Bucklaw," he said, "but the deil of ony Master's face he shall see till he has sleepit and waken'd on't. He'll ken himsell better the morn's morning. It sets the like of him, to be bringing a crew of drunken hunters here, when he kens there is but little preparation to sloken his ain drought." And he disappeared from the window, leaving them all to digest their exclusion as they best might.

But another person, of whose presence Caleb, in the animation of the debate, was not aware, had listened in silence to its progress. This was the principal domestic of the stranger—a man of trust and consequence—the same, who, in the hunting-field had accommodated Bucklaw with the use of his horse. He was in the stable when Caleb had contrived the expulsion of his fellow-

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servants, and thus avoided sharing the same fate from which his personal importance would certainly not have otherwise saved him.

This personage perceived the manœuvre of Caleb, easily appreciated the motive of his conduct, and knowing his master's intentions towards the family of Ravenswood, had no difficulty as to the line of conduct he ought to adopt. He took the place of Caleb (unperceived by the latter,) at the post of audience which he had just left, and announced to the assembled domestics, "that it was his master's pleasure that Lord Bittlebrains' retinue and his own should go down to the adjacent Change-house, and call for what refreshments they might have occasion for, and he should take care to discharge the lawing."

The jolly troop of huntsmen retired from the inhospitable gate of Wolf's Crag, execrating, as they descended the steep path-way, the niggard and unworthy disposition of the proprietor, and damning, with more than sylvan license, both the castle and its inhabitants. Bucklaw, with many qualities which would have made him a man of worth and judgment in more favourable circumstances, had been so utterly neglected in point of education, that he was apt to think and feel according to the ideas of the companions of his pleasures. The praises which had recently been heaped upon himself he contrasted with the general abuse now levelled against Ravenswood—he recalled to his mind the dull and monotonous days he had spent in the tower of Wolf's Crag, compared with the joviality of his usual life—he felt, with great indignation, his exclusion from the castle, which he considered as a gross affront, and every mingled feeling led him to break off the union which he had formed with the Master of Ravenswood.

On arriving at the Change-house of the village of Wolf's-hope, he unexpectedly met with an old acquaintance just alighting from his horse. This was no other than the very respectable Captain Craigengelt, who immediately came up to him, and without appearing to retain any recollection of the indifferent terms on which

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they had parted, shook him by the hand in the warmest manner possible. A warm grasp of the hand was what Bucklaw could never help returning with cordiality, and no sooner had Craigengelt felt the pressure of his fingers than he knew the terms on which he stood with him.

"Long life to you, Bucklaw!" he exclaimed; "there's life for honest folks in this bad world yet!"

The Jacobites at this period, with what propriety I know not, used, it must be noticed, the term of *honest men* as peculiarly descriptive of their own party.

"Ay, and for others besides, it seems," answered Bucklaw; "otherwise how came you to venture hither, noble Captain?"

"Who—I?—I am as free as the wind at Martinmas, that pays neither land-rent nor annual; all is explained—all settled with the honest old drivellers yonder of Auld Reekie—Pooh! pooh! they dared not keep me a week of days in durance. A certain person has better friends among them than you wot of, and can serve a friend when it is least likely."

"Pshaw!" answered Hayston, who perfectly knew and thoroughly despised the character of this man, "none of your cogging gibberish—tell me truly, are you at liberty and in safety?"

"Free and safe as a whig baillie on the causeway of his own borough, or a canting Presbyterian minister in his own pulpit—and I came to tell you that you need not remain in hiding any longer."

"Then I suppose you call yourself my friend, Captain Craigengelt?" said Bucklaw.

"Friend!" replied Craigengelt, "my cock of the pit? why, I am thy very Achates, man, as I have heard scholars say—hand and glove—bark and tree—thine to life and death!"

"I'll try that in a moment," said Bucklaw. "Thou art never without money, however thou comest by it—Lend me two pieces to wash the dust out of these honest fellows' throats, in the first place, and then"—

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"Two pieces?—twenty are at thy service, my lad—and twenty to back them."

"Ay—say you so?" said Bucklaw, pausing, for his natural penetration led him to suspect some extraordinary motive lay couched under such an excess of generosity. "Craigengelt, you are either an honest fellow in right good earnest, and I scarce know how to believe that—or you are cleverer than I took you for, and I scarce know how to believe that either."

"*L'un n'empeche pas l'autre*," said Craigengelt, "touch and try—the gold is good as ever was weighed."

He put a quantity of gold pieces into Bucklaw's hand, which he thrust into his pocket without either counting or looking at them, only observing, "that he was so circumstanced that he must enlist, though the devil offered the press-money;" and then turning to the huntsmen, he called out, "Come along, my lads—all is at my cost."

"Long life to Bucklaw!" shouted the men of the chase.

"And confusion to him that takes his share of the sport, and leaves the hunters as dry as a drum-head," added another, by way of corollary.

"The house of Ravenswood was ance a gude and an honourable house in this land," said an old man, "but it's lost its credit this day, and the Master has shown himself no better than a greedy cullion."

And with this conclusion, which was unanimously agreed to by all who heard it, they rushed tumultuously into the house of entertainment, where they revelled till a late hour. The jovial temper of Bucklaw seldom permitted him to be nice in the choice of his associates; and on the present occasion, when his joyous debauch received additional zest from the intervention of an unusual space of sobriety, and almost abstinence, he was as happy in leading the revels, as if his comrades had been sons of princes. Craigengelt had his own purposes, in fooling him up to the top of his bent; and having some low humour, much impudence, and the power of singing a good song, understanding besides thoroughly the disposition of

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his regained associate, he readily succeeded in involving him bumper-deep in the festivity of the meeting.

A very different scene was in the meantime passing in the tower of Wolf's Crag. When the Master of Ravenswood left the court-yard, too much busied with his own perplexed reflections to pay attention to the manœuvre of Caleb, he ushered his guests into the great hall of the Castle.

The indefatigable Balderstone, who, from choice or habit, worked on from morning to night, had, by degrees, cleared this desolate apartment of the confused reliques of the funeral banquet, and restored it to some order. But not all his skill and labour, in disposing to advantage the little furniture which remained, could remove the dark and disconsolate appearance of those ancient and disfurnished walls. The narrow windows, flanked by deep indentures into the wall, seemed formed rather to exclude than to admit the cheerful light; and the heavy and gloomy appearance of the thunder-sky added still farther to the obscurity.

As Ravenswood, with the grace of a gallant of that period, but not without a certain stiffness and embarrassment of manner, handed the young lady to the upper end of the apartment, her father remained standing more near to the door, as if about to disengage himself from his hat and cloak. At this moment the clang of the portal was heard, a sound at which the stranger started, stepped hastily to the window, and looked with an air of alarm at Ravenswood, when he saw that the gate of the court was shut, and his domestics excluded.

"You have nothing to fear, sir," said Ravenswood, gravely; "this roof retains the means of giving protection though not welcome. Methinks," he added, "it is time that I should know who they are that have thus highly honoured my ruined dwelling?"

The young lady remained silent and motionless, and the father, to whom the question was more directly addressed, seemed in the situation of a performer who has ventured to take upon himself a part which he finds him-

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self unable to present, and who comes to a pause when it is most to be expected that he should speak. While he endeavoured to cover his embarrassment with the exterior ceremonials of a well-bred demeanour, it was obvious, that in making his bow, one foot shuffled forward, as if to advance—the other backward, as if with the purpose of escape—and as he undid the cape of his coat, and raised his beaver from his face, his fingers fumbled as if the one had been linked with rusted iron, or the other had weighed equal with a stone of lead. The darkness of the sky seemed to increase, as if to supply the want of those mufflings which he laid aside with such evident reluctance. The impatience of Ravenswood increased also in proportion to the delay of the stranger, and he appeared to struggle under agitation, though probably from a very different cause. He laboured to restrain his desire to speak, while the stranger, to all appearance, was at a loss for words to express what he felt it necessary to say. At length Ravenswood's impatience broke the bounds he had imposed upon it.

"I perceive," he said, "that Sir William Ashton is unwilling to announce himself in the Castle of Wolf's Crag."

"I had hoped it was unnecessary," said the Lord Keeper, relieved from his silence, as a spectre by the voice of the exorcist; "and I am obliged to you, Master of Ravenswood, for breaking the ice at once, where circumstances—unhappy circumstances let me call them—rendered self-introduction peculiarly awkward."

"And I am not then," said the Master of Ravenswood, gravely, "to consider the honour of this visit as purely accidental?"

"Let us distinguish a little," said the Keeper, assuming an appearance of ease which perhaps his heart was a stranger to; "this is an honour which I have eagerly desired for some time, but which I might never have obtained, save for the accident of the storm. My daughter and I are alike grateful for this opportunity of thanking the brave man, to whom she owes her life and I mine."

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The hatred which divided the great families in the feudal times had lost little of its bitterness, though it no longer expressed itself in deeds of open violence. Not the feelings which Ravenswood had begun to entertain towards Lucy Ashton, not the hospitality due to his guests, were able entirely to subdue, though they warmly combated, the deep passions which arose within him, at beholding his father's foe standing in the hall of the family of which he had in a great measure accelerated the ruin. His looks glanced from the father to the daughter with an irresolution, of which Sir William Ashton did not think it proper to await the conclusion. He had now disembarrassed himself of his riding-dress, and walking up to his daughter, he undid the fastening of her mask.

"Lucy, my love," he said, raising her, and leading her towards Ravenswood, "lay aside your mask, and let us express our gratitude to the Master openly and barefaced."

"If he will condescend to accept it," was all that Lucy uttered; but in a tone so sweetly modulated, and which seemed to imply at once a feeling and a forgiving of the cold reception to which they were exposed, that, coming from a creature so innocent and so beautiful, her words cut Ravenswood to the very heart for his harshness. He muttered something of surprise, something of confusion, and, ending with a warm and eager expression of his happiness at being able to afford her shelter under his roof, he saluted her, as the ceremonial of the time enjoined upon such occasions. Their cheeks had touched and were withdrawn from each other—Ravenswood had not quitted the hand which he had taken in kindly courtesy—a blush, which attached more consequence by far than was usual to such ceremony, still mantled on Lucy Ashton's beautiful cheek, when the apartment was suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, which seemed absolutely to swallow the darkness of the hall. Every object might have been for an instant seen distinctly. The slight and half-sinking form of Lucy Ashton, the well-proportioned and stately figure of Ravenswood, his dark features, and the fiery, yet irresolute expression of his eyes,—the

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old arms and scutcheons which hung on the walls of the apartment, were for an instant distinctly visible to the Keeper by a strong red brilliant glare of light. Its disappearance was almost instantly followed by a burst of thunder, for the storm-cloud was very near the castle; and the peal was so sudden and dreadful, that the old tower rocked to its foundation, and every inmate concluded it was falling upon them. The soot which had not been disturbed for centuries, showered down the huge tunnelled chimneys—lime and dust flew in clouds from the wall; and, whether the lightning had actually struck the castle, or whether through the violent concussion of the air, several heavy stones were hurled from the mouldering battlements into the roaring sea beneath. It might seem as if the ancient founder of the castle were bestriding the thunder-storm, and proclaiming his displeasure at the reconciliation of his descendant with the enemy of his house.

The consternation was general, and it required the efforts of both the Lord Keeper and Ravenswood to keep Lucy from fainting. Thus was the Master a second time engaged in the most delicate and dangerous of all tasks, that of affording support and assistance to a beautiful and helpless being, who, as seen before in a similar situation, had already become a favourite of his imagination, both when awake and when slumbering. If the Genius of the House really condemned a union betwixt the Master and his fair guest, the means by which he expressed his sentiments were as unhappily chosen as if he had been a mere mortal. The train of little attentions, absolutely necessary to soothe the young lady's mind, and aid her in composing her spirits, necessarily threw the Master of Ravenswood into such an intercourse with her father, as was calculated, for the moment at least, to break down the barrier of feudal enmity which divided them. To express himself churlishly, or even coldly, towards an old man, whose daughter (and *such* a daughter) lay before them, overpowered with natural terror—and all this under his own roof—the thing was impossible; and by the time

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that Lucy, extending a hand to each, was able to thank them for their kindness, the Master felt that his sentiments of hostility towards the Lord Keeper were by no means those most predominant in his bosom.

The weather, her state of health, the absence of her attendants, all prevented the possibility of Lucy Ashton renewing her journey to Bittlebrains-House, which was full five miles distant; and the Master of Ravenswood could not but, in common courtesy, offer the shelter of his roof for the rest of the day and for the night. But a flush of less soft expression, a look much more habitual to his features, resumed predominance when he mentioned how meanly he was provided for the entertainment of his guests.

"Do not mention deficiencies," said the Lord Keeper, eager to interrupt him and prevent his resuming an alarming topic; "you are preparing to set out for the Continent, and your house is probably for the present unfurnished. All this we understand; but if you mention inconvenience, you will oblige us to seek accommodations in the hamlet."

As the Master of Ravenswood was about to reply, the door of the hall opened, and Caleb Balderstone rushed in.

CHAPTER XI.

> Let them have meat enough, woman—half a hen;
> There be old rotten pilchards—put them off too;
> 'Tis but a little new anointing of them,
> And a strong onion, that confounds the savour.
>
> *Love's Pilgrimage.*

The thunderbolt, which had stunned all who were within hearing of it, had only served to awaken the bold and inventive genius of the flower of Majors-Domo. Almost before the clatter had ceased, and while there was yet scarce an assurance whether the castle was stand-

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ing or falling, Caleb exclaimed, "Heavens be praised!—this comes to hand like the boul of a pint stoup." He then barred the kitchen door in the face of the Lord Keeper's servant, whom he perceived returning from the party at the gate, and muttering, "how the deil cam he in?—but deil may care—Mysie, what are ye sitting shaking and greeting in the chimney-nuik for? Come here—or stay where ye are, and skirl as loud as ye can—it's a' ye're gude for—I say, ye auld deevil, skirl—skirl—louder—louder, woman—gar the gentles hear ye in the ha'—I have heard ye as far off as the Bass for a less matter. And stay—down wi' that crockery"—

And with a sweeping blow, he threw down from a shelf some articles of pewter and earthern ware. He exalted his voice amid the clatter, shouting and roaring in a manner which changed Mysie's hysterical terrors of the thunder into fears that her old fellow-servant was gone distracted. "He has dung down a' the bits o' pigs too—the only thing we had left to baud a soup milk—and he has spilt the batted kitt that was for the Master's dinner. Mercy save us, the auld man's gaen clean and clear wud wi' the thunner!"

"Haud your tongue, ye b——!" said Caleb, in the impetuous and overbearing triumph of successful invention, "a's provided now—dinner and a' thing—the thunner's done a' in a clap of a hand!"

"Puir man, he's muckle astray," said Mysie, looking at him with a mixture of pity and alarm; "I wish he may ever come hame to himsell again."

"Here, ye auld doited deevil," said Caleb, still exulting in his extrication from a dilemma which had seemed insurmountable; "keep the strange man out of the kitchen—swear the thunner came down the chimney, and spoiled the best dinner ye ever dressed—beef—bacon—kid—lark—leveret—wild fowl—venison, and what not. Lay it on thick, and never mind expenses. I'll awa' up to the ha'—make a' the confusion ye can—but be sure ye keep out the strange servant."

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With these charges to his ally, Caleb posted up to the hall, but stopping to reconnoitre through an aperture, which time, for the convenience of many a domestic in succession, had made in the door, and perceiving the situation of Miss Ashton, he had prudence enough to make a pause, both to avoid adding to her alarm, and in order to secure attention to his account of the disastrous effects of the thunder.

But when he perceived that the lady was recovered, and heard the conversation turn upon the accommodation and refreshment which the castle afforded, he thought it time to burst into the room in the manner announced in the last chapter.

"Wullawins!—wullawins!—such a misfortune to befa' the House of Ravenswood, and I to live to see it!"

"What is the matter, Caleb?" said his master, somewhat alarmed in his turn; "has any part of the castle fallen?"

"Castle fa'an?—na, but the sute's fa'an, and the thunner's come right down the kitchen-lumm, and the things are a' lying here awa, there awa, like the Laird o' Hotchpotch's lands—and wi' brave guests of honour and quality to entertain,"—a low bow here to Sir William Ashton and his daughter,—"and naething left in the house fit to present for dinner—or for supper either, for aught that I can see!"

"I verily believe you, Caleb," said Ravenswood dryly.

Balderstone here turned to his master a half-upbraiding, half-imploring countenance, and edged towards him as he repeated, "It was nae great matter of preparation; but just something added to your honour's ordinary course of fare—*petty cover*, as they say at the Louvre—three courses and the fruit."

"Keep your intolerable nonsense to yourself, you old fool!" said Ravenswood, mortified at his officiousness, yet not knowing how to contradict him, without the risk of giving rise to scenes yet more ridiculous.

Caleb saw his advantage, and resolved to improve it. But first, observing that the Lord Keeper's servant enter-

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ed the apartment, and spoke apart with his master, he took the same opportunity to whisper a few words into Ravenswood's ear—"Haud your tongue, for heaven's sake, sir,—if it's my pleasure to hazard my soul in telling lees for the honour of the family, its nae business o' yours—and if ye let me gang on quietly, I'se be moderate in my banquet; but if ye contradict me, deil but I dress ye a dinner fit for a duke."

Ravenswood, in fact, thought it would be best to let his officious butler run on, who proceeded to enumerate upon his fingers,—"No muckle provision—might hae served four persons of honour,—first course, capons in white broth—roast kid,—bacon with reverence,—second course, roasted leveret—butter crabs—a veal florentine,—third course, black-cock—it's black eneugh now wi' the sute—plumdamas—a tart—a flam—and some nonsense sweet things, and comfits—and that's a'," he said, seeing the impatience of his master; "that's just a' was o't—forby the apples and pears."

Miss Ashton had by degrees gathered her spirits, so far as to pay some attention to what was going on; and observing the restrained impatience of Ravenswood, contrasted with the peculiar determination of manner with which Caleb detailed his imaginary banquet, the whole struck her as so ridiculous, that, despite every effort to the contrary, she burst into a fit of incontrollable laughter, in which she was joined by her father, though with more moderation, and finally by the Master of Ravenswood himself, though conscious that the jest was at his own expense. Their mirth—for a scene which we read with little emotion often appears extremely ludicrous to the spectators—made the old vault ring again. They ceased—they renewed—they ceased—they renewed again their shouts of laughter! Caleb, in the meantime, stood his ground with a grave, angry, and scornful dignity, which greatly enhanced the ridicule of the scene, and the mirth of the spectators.

At length, when the voices, and nearly the strength of the laughers, were exhausted, he exclaimed, with very little ceremony, "The deil's in the gentles! they break-

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fast sae lordly, that the loss of the best dinner ever cook pat fingers to, makes them as merry as if it were the best jeest in a' George Buchanan. If there was as little in your honours' wames, as there is in Caleb Balderstone's, less caickling wad serve ye on sic a gravaminous subject."

Caleb's blunt expression of resentment again awakened the mirth of the company, which, by the way, he regarded not only as an aggression upon the dignity of the family, but a special contempt of the eloquence with which he himself had summed up the extent of their supposed losses ;—" a description of a dinner," as he said afterwards to Mysie, " that wad hae made a fu' man hungry, and them to sit there laughing at it!"

" But," said Miss Ashton, composing her countenance as well as she could, " are all these delicacies so totally destroyed, that no scrap can be collected ?"

" Collected, my leddy ! what wad ye collect out of the sute and the ass ? Ye may gang down yoursell, and look into our kitchen—the cookmaid in the trembling exies—the gude vivers lying a' about—beef—capons, and white broth—florentine and flams—bacon wi' reverence, and a' the sweet confections and whim-whams ; ye'll see them a', my leddy—that is," said he, correcting himself, " ye'll no see ony o' them now, for the cook has soopit them up, as was weel her part ; but ye'll see the white broth where it was spilt. I pat my fingers in it, and it tastes as like sour-milk as ony thing else ; if that isna the effect of thunner, I kenna what is.—This gentleman here couldna but hear the clash of our haill dishes, china and silver thegither."

The Lord Keeper's domestic, though a statesman's attendant, and of course trained to command his countenance upon all occasions, was somewhat discomposed by this appeal, to which he only answered by a bow.

" I think, Mr. Butler," said the Lord Keeper, who began to be afraid lest the prolongation of this scene should at length displease Ravenswood,—" I think, that were you to retire with my servant Lockhard—he has travelled, and is quite accustomed to accidents and contingencies of

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of every kind, and I hope betwixt you, you may find out some mode of supply at this emergency."

"His honour kens,"—said Caleb, who, however hopeless of himself of accomplishing what was desirable, would, like the high-spirited elephant, rather have died in the effort, than brooked the aid of a brother in commission,—"his honour kens weel I need nae counsellor, when the honour of the house is concerned."

"I should be unjust if I denied it, Caleb," said his master; "but your art lies chiefly in making apologies, upon which we can no more dine, than upon the bill of fare of our thunder-blasted dinner. Now, possibly, Mr. Lockhard's talent may consist in finding some substitute for that, which certainly is not, and has in all probability never been."

"Your honour is pleased to be facetious," said Caleb, "but I am sure, that for the warst, for a walk as far as Wolf's-hope, I could dine forty men,—no that the folk there deserve your honour's custom. They hae been ill-advised in the matter of the duty-eggs and butter, I winna deny that."

"Do go consult together," said the Master, "go down to the village, and do the best you can. We must not let our guests remain without refreshment, to save the honour of a ruined family. And here, Caleb—take my purse; I believe that will prove your best ally."

"Purse? purse, indeed?" quoth Caleb, indignantly flinging out of the room,—"what suld I do wi' your honour's purse, on your ain grund? I trust we are no to pay for our ain?"

The servants left the hall; and the door was no sooner shut, than the Lord Keeper began to apologize for the rudeness of his mirth; and Lucy to hope she had given no pain or offence to the kind-hearted faithful old man.

"Caleb and I must both learn, madam, to undergo with good humour, or at least with patience, the ridicule which every where attaches itself to poverty."

"You do yourself injustice, Master of Ravenswood, on my word of honour," answered his elder guest. "I be-

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lieve I know more of your affairs than you do yourself, and I hope to show you, that I am interested in them; and that—in short, that your prospects are better than you apprehend. In the meantime, I can conceive nothing so respectable, as the spirit which rises above misfortune, and prefers honourable privations to debt or dependence."

Whether from fear of offending the delicacy, or awakening the pride of the Master, the Lord Keeper made these allusions with an appearance of fearful and hesitating reserve, and seemed to be afraid that he was intruding too far, in venturing to touch, however lightly, upon such a topic, even when the Master had led to it. In short, he appeared at once pushed on by his desire of appearing friendly, and held back by the fear of intrusion. It was no wonder that the Master of Ravenswood, little acquainted as he then was with life, should have given this consummate courtier credit for more sincerity than was probably to be found in a score of his cast. He answered, however, with reserve, that he was indebted to all who might think well of him; and, apologizing to his guests, he left the hall, in order to make such arrangements for their entertainment as circumstances admitted.

Upon consulting with old Mysie, the accommodations for the night were easily completed, as indeed they admitted of little choice. The Master surrendered his apartment for the use of Miss Ashton, and Mysie, (once a person of consequence) dressed in a black satin gown which had belonged of yore to the Master's grandmother, and had figured in the court-balls of Henrietta Maria, went to attend her as lady's maid. He next inquired after Bucklaw, and understanding he was at the Change-house with the huntsmen and some companions, he desired Caleb to call there and acquaint him how he was circumstanced at Wolf's Crag—to intimate to him it would be most convenient if he could find a bed in the hamlet, as the elder guest must necessarily be quartered in the secret chamber, the only spare bed-room which could be made fit to receive him. The Master saw no hardship in passing the night by the hall-fire, wrapt in his campaign-

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cloak; and to Scottish domestics of the day, even of the highest rank, nay, to young men of family or fashion, on any pinch, clean straw, or a dry hay-loft, was always held good night-quarters.

For the rest, Lockhard had his master's orders to bring some venison from the inn, and Caleb was to trust to his wits for the honour of his family. The Master, indeed, a second time held out his purse; but, as it was in sight of the strange servant, the butler thought himself obliged to decline what his fingers itched to clutch. "Couldna he hae slippit it gently into my hand?" said Caleb—"but his honour will never learn how to bear himsell in siccan cases."

Mysie, in the meantime, according to a uniform custom in remote places in Scotland, offered the strangers the produce of her little dairy, "while better meat was getting ready." And according to another custom, not yet wholly in desuetude, as the storm was now drifting off to leeward, the Master carried the Keeper to the top of his highest tower to admire a wide and waste extent of view, and to "weary for his dinner."

CHAPTER XII.

"Now, dame," quoth he, "Je vous dis sans doute,
Had I nought of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bread nought but a shiver,
And after that a roasted pigge's head,
(But I ne wold for me no beast were dead)
Then had I with you homely sufferaunce."

Chaucer, Sumner's Tale.

It was not without some secret misgivings that Caleb set out upon his exploratory expedition. In fact, it was attended with a treble difficulty. He dared not tell his

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master the offence which he had that morning given to Bucklaw, (just for the honour of the family,)—he dared not acknowledge he had been too hasty in refusing the purse—and, thirdly, he was somewhat apprehensive of unpleasant consequences upon his meeting Hayston under the impression of an affront, and probably by this time under the influence also of no small quantity of brandy.

Caleb, to do him justice, was as bold as any lion where the honour of the family of Ravenswood was concerned; but his was that considerate valour which does not delight in unnecessary risks. This, however, was a secondary consideration; the main point was to veil the indigence of the house-keeping at the castle, and to make good his vaunt of the cheer which his resources could procure, without Lockhard's assistance, and without supplies from his master. This was as prime a point of honour with him, as with the generous elephant with whom we have already compared him, who, being over-tasked, broke his skull through the desperate exertions which he made to discharge his duty, when he perceived they were bringing up another to his assistance.

The village which they now approached had frequently afforded the distressed butler resources upon similar emergencies; but his relations with it had been of late much altered.

It was a little hamlet, which straggled along the side of a creek formed by the discharge of a small brook into the sea, and was hidden from the castle, to which it had been in former times an appendage, by the intervention of the shoulder of a hill forming a projecting headland. It was called Wolf's-hope, (*i. e.* Wolf's Haven) and the few inhabitants gained a precarious subsistence by manning two or three fishing-boats in the herring season, and smuggling gin and brandy during the winter months. They paid a kind of hereditary respect to the Lords of Ravenswood; but, in the difficulties of the family, most of the inhabitants of Wolf's-hope had contrived to get feu-rights[4] to their little possessions, their huts, kail-yards, and rights of commonty, so that they were emancipated from the

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chains of feudal dependence, and free from the various exactions with which, under every possible pretext, or without any pretext at all, the Scottish landlords of the period, themselves in great poverty, were wont to harass their still poorer tenants at will. They might be, on the whole, termed independent, a circumstance peculiarly galling to Caleb, who had been wont to exercise over them the same sweeping authority in levying contributions which was exercised in former times in England, when 'the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provisions with power and prerogative, instead of money, brought home the plunder of an hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in an hundred caverns.'*

Caleb loved the memory and resented the downfall of that authority, which mimicked, on a petty scale, the grand contributions exacted by the feudal sovereigns. And as he fondly flattered himself that the awful rule and right supremacy which assigned to the Barons of Ravenswood the first and most effective interest in all productions of nature within five miles of their castle, only slumbered and was not departed for ever, he used every now and then to give the recollection of the inhabitants a little jog by some petty exaction. These were at first submitted to, with more or less readiness, by the inhabitants of the hamlet; for they had been so long used to consider the wants of the Baron and his family as having a title to be preferred to their own, that their actual independence did not convey to them an immediate sense of freedom. They resembled a man that has been long fettered, who, even at liberty, feels, in imagination, the grasp of the handcuffs still binding his wrists. But the exercise of freedom is quickly followed with the natural consciousness of its immunities, as the enlarged prisoner, by the free use of his limbs, soon dispels the cramped feeling they had acquired when bound.

The inhabitants of Wolf's-hope began to grumble, to

* Burke's Speech on Economical Reform.—Works, vol. iii. p. 250.

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resist, and at length positively to refuse compliance with the exactions of Caleb Balderstone. It was in vain he reminded them that when the eleventh Lord Ravenswood, called the Skipper, from his delight in naval matters, had encouraged the trade of their port by building the pier, (a bulwark of stones rudely piled together,) which protected the fishing-boats from the weather, it had been matter of understanding, that he was to have the first stone of butter after the calving of every cow within the barony, and the first egg, thence called the Monday's egg, laid by every hen on every Monday in the year.

The fenars heard and scratched their heads, coughed, sneezed, and being pressed for answer, rejoined with one voice, " they could not say ;"—the universal refuge of a Scottish peasant, when pressed to admit a claim which his conscience owns, or perhaps his feelings, and his interest inclines him to deny.

Caleb, however, furnished the notables of Wolf's-hope with a note of the requisition of butter and eggs, which he claimed as arrears of the aforesaid subsidy, or kindly aid, payable as abovementioned ; and having intimated that he would not be averse to compound the same for goods or money, if it was inconvenient to them to pay in kind, left them, as he hoped, to debate the mode of assessing themselves for that purpose. On the contrary, they met with a determined purpose of resisting the exaction, and were only undecided as to the mode of grounding their opposition, when the cooper, a very important person on a fishing station, and one of the Conscript Fathers of the village, observed, " That their hens had caickled mony a day for the Lords of Ravenswood, and it was time they suld caickle for those that gave them roost and barley." A unanimous grin intimated the assent of the assembly. " And," continued the orator, " if it's your wull, I'll just tak a step as far as Dunse for Davie Dingwall the writer, that's come frae the north to settle amang us, and he'll pit this job to rights, I'se warrant him."

A day was accordingly fixed for holding a grand *palaver* at Wolf's-hope on the subject of Caleb's requisitions, and he was invited to attend at the hamlet for that purpose

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He went with open hands and empty stomach, trusting to fill the one on his master's account, and the other on his own score, at the expense of the feuars of Wolf's-hope. But, death to his hopes! as he entered the eastern end of the straggling village, the awful form of Davie Dingwall, a sly, dry, hard-fisted, shrewd country attorney, who had already acted against the family of Ravenswood, and was a principal agent of Sir William Ashton, trotted in at the western extremity, bestriding a leathern portmanteau stuffed with the feu-charters of the hamlet, and hoping he had not kept Mr. Balderstone waiting, "as he was instructed and fully empowered to pay or receive, compound or compensate, and, in fine, to *agé*[5] as accords, respecting all mutual and unsettled claims whatsoever, belonging or competent to the Honourable Edgar Ravenswood, commonly called the Master of Ravenswood"—

"The *Right* Honourable Edgar *Lord Ravenswood*," said Caleb with great emphasis; for, though conscious he had little chance of advantage in the conflict to ensue, he was resolved not to sacrifice one jot of honour.

"Lord Ravenswood then," said the man of business; "we shall not quarrel with you about titles of courtesy—commonly called Lord Ravenswood, or Master of Ravenswood, heritable proprietor of the lands and barony of Wolf's Crag, on the one part, and to John Whitefish and others, feuars in the town of Wolf's-hope, within the barony aforesaid, on the other part."

Caleb was conscious, from sad experience, that he would wage a very different strife with this mercenary champion, than with the individual feuars themselves, upon whose old recollections, predilections, and habits of thinking, he might have wrought by an hundred indirect arguments, to which their deputy-representative was totally insensible. The issue of the debate proved the reality of his apprehensions. It was in vain he strained his eloquence and ingenuity, and collected into one mass all arguments arising from antique custom and hereditary respect, from the good deeds done by the Lord of Ra-

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venswood to the community of Wolf's-hope in former days, and from what might be expected from them in future. The Writer stuck to the contents of his feu-charters—he could not see it—'twas not in the bond. And when Caleb, determined to try what a little spirit would do, deprecated the consequences of Lord Ravenswood withdrawing his protection from the burgh, and even hinted at his using active measures of resentment, the man of law sneered in his face.

"His clients," he said, "had determined to do the best they could for their own town, and he thought Lord Ravenswood, since he was a lord, might have enough to do to look after his own castle. As to any threats of stouthrief oppression, by rule of thumb, or *via facti*, as the law termed it, he would have Mr. Balderstone recollect, that new times were not as old times—that they lived on the south of the Forth, and far from the Highlands—that his clients thought they were able to protect themselves; but should they find themselves mistaken, they would apply to the government for the protection of a corporal and four red-coats, who," said Mr. Dingwall, "would be perfectly able to secure them against Lord Ravenswood, and all that he or his followers could do by the strong hand."

If Caleb could have concentrated all the lightnings of aristocracy in his eye, to have struck dead this contemner of allegiance and privilege, he would have launched them at his head, without respect to the consequences. As it was, he was compelled to turn his course backward to the castle; and there he remained for full half a day invisible and inaccessible even to Mysie, sequestered in his own peculiar dungeon, where he sat burnishing a single pewter plate, and whistling Maggy Lauder six hours without intermission.

The issue of this unfortunate requisition had shut against Caleb all resources which could be derived from Wolf's-hope and its purlieus, the El Dorado, or Peru, from which, in all former cases of exigence, he had been able to extract some assistance. He had, indeed, in a

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manner vowed that the deil should have him, if ever he put the print of his foot within its causeway again. He had hitherto kept his word; and, strange to tell, this secession had, as he intended, in some degree the effect of a punishment upon the refractory feuars. Mr. Balderstone had been a person in their eyes connected with a superior order of beings, whose presence used to grace their little festivities, whose advice they found useful on many occasions, and whose communications gave a sort of credit to their village. The place, they acknowledged "didna look as it used to do, and should do, since Mr. Caleb keepit the castle sae closely—but doubtless, touching the eggs and butter, it was a most unreasonable demand, as Mr. Dingwall had justly made manifest."

Thus stood matters betwixt the parties, when the old butler, though it was gall and wormwood to him, found himself obliged either to acknowledge before a strange man of quality, and, what was much worse, before that stranger's servant, the total inability of Wolf's Crag to produce a dinner, or he must trust to the compassion of the feuars of Wolf's-hope. It was a dreadful degradation, but necessity was equally imperious and lawless. With these feelings he entered the street of the village.

Willing to shake himself from his companion as soon as possible, he directed Mr. Lockhard to Luckie Sma'-trash's change-house, where a din, proceeding from the revels of Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and their party, sounded half-way down the street, while the red glare from the window overpowered the grey twilight which was now settling down, and glimmered against a parcel of old tubs, kegs, and barrels, piled up in the cooper's yard, on the other side of the way.

"If you, Mr. Lockhard," said the old butler to his companion, "will be pleased to step to the change-house, where that light comes from, and where, as I judge, they are now singing 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen,' ye may do your master's errand about the venison, and I will do mine about Bucklaw's bed, as I return frae getting the rest of the vivers.—It's no that the venison is actually

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needfu'," he added, detaining his colleague by the button, "to make up the dinner; but, as a compliment to the hunters, ye ken—and, Mr. Lockhard—if they offer ye a drink o' yill, or a cup o' wine, or a glass o' brandy, ye'll be a wise man to take it, in case the thunner should hae soured ours at the castle,—whilk is ower muckle to be dreaded."

He then permitted Lockhard to depart; and with foot heavy as lead, and yet far lighter than his heart, stepped on through the unequal street of the straggling village, meditating on whom he ought to make his first attack. It was necessary he should find some one, with whom old acknowledged greatness should weigh more than recent independence, and to whom his application might appear an act of high dignity, relenting at once and soothing. But he could not recollect an inhabitant of a mind so constructed. "Our kail is like to be cauld eneugh too," he reflected, as the chorus of Cauld Kail in Aberdeen again reached his ears. The minister—he had got his presentation from the late lord, but they had quarrelled about tiends;—the brewster's wife—she had trusted long and the bill was aye scored up—and unless the dignity of the family should actually require it, it would be a sin to distress a widow woman. None was so able—but, on the other hand, none was likely to be less willing to stand his friend upon the present occasion, than Gibbie Girder, the man of tubs and barrels already mentioned, who had headed the insurrection in the matter of the egg and butter subsidy.—"But a' comes o' taking folk on the right side, I trow," quoth Caleb to himself; "and I had ance the ill hap to say he was but a Johnnie Newcome in our town, and the carle bore the family an ill-will ever since. But he married a bonnie young quean, Jean Lightbody, auld Lightbody's daughter, him that was in the steading of Loup-the-dyke,—and auld Lightbody was married himsell to Marion, that was about my lady in the family forty years syne—I hae had mony a day's daffing wi' Jean's mither, and they say she bides on wi' them—the carle has Jacobuses and Georgiuses baith, an ane could get at them—and sure I

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am, it's doing him an honour him or his never deserved at our hand, the ungracious sumph ; and if he loses by us a' thegither, he is e'en cheap o't, he can spare it brawly."

Shaking off irresolution, therefore, and turning at once upon his heel, Caleb walked hastily back to the cooper's house, lifted the latch without ceremony, and, in a moment, found himself behind the *hallan*, or partition, from which position he could, himself unseen, reconnoitre the interior of the *but*, or kitchen apartment, of the mansion.

Reverse of the sad menage at the Castle of Wolf's Crag, a bickering fire roared up the cooper's chimney. His wife on the one side, in her pearlings and pudding-sleeves, put the last finishing touch to her holiday's apparel, while she contemplated a very handsome and good-humoured face in a broken mirror, raised upon the *bink* (the shelves on which the plates are disposed,) for her special accommodation. Her mother, old Luckie Loup-the-dyke, " a canty carline" as was within twenty miles of her, according to the unanimous report of the *cummers*, or gossips, sat by the fire in the full glory of a grogram gown, lammer beads, and a clean cockernony, whiffing a snug pipe of tobacco, and superintending the affairs of the kitchen. For—sight more interesting to the anxious heart and craving entrails of the desponding seneschal, than either buxom dame or canty cummer,—there bubbled on the aforesaid bickering fire, a huge pot, or rather cauldron, steaming with beef and brewis ; while before it revolved two spits, turned each by one of the cooper's apprentices, seated in the opposite corners of the chimney ; the one loaded with a quarter of mutton, while the other was graced with a fat goose and a brace of wild ducks. The sight and scent of such a land of plenty almost wholly overcame the drooping spirits of Caleb. He turned, for a moment's space, to reconnoitre the *ben*, or parlour end of the house, and there saw a sight scarce less affecting to his feelings ;—a large round table, covered for ten or twelve persons, *decored* (according to his own favourite term,) with *napery* as white as snow ;

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grand flagons of pewter, intermixed with one or two silver cups, containing, as was probable, something worthy the brilliancy of their outward appearance; clean trenchers, cutty spoons, knives and forks, sharp, burnished, and prompt for action, which lay all displayed as for an especial festival.

"The deil's in the peddling tub-coopering carle!" muttered Caleb, in all the envy of astonishment; "it's a shame to see the like o' them gusting their gabs at sic a rate. But if some o' that good cheer does not find its way to Wolf's Crag this night, my name is not Caleb Balderstone."

So resolving, he entered the apartment, and, in all courteous greeting, saluted both the mother and the daughter. Wolf's Crag was the court of the barony, Caleb prime minister at Wolf's crag; and it has ever been remarked, that though the masculine subject who pays the taxes, sometimes growls at the courtiers by whom they are imposed, the said courtiers continue, nevertheless, welcome to the fair sex, to whom they furnish the newest small-talk and the earliest fashions. Both the dames were, therefore, at once about old Caleb's neck, setting up their throats together by way of welcome.

"Ay, sirs, Mr. Balderstone, and is this you?—A sight of you is gude for sair een—sit down—sit down—the gudeman will be blithe to see you—ye nar saw him sae cadgy in your life; but we are to christen our bit wean the night, as ye will hae heard, and doubtless ye will stay and see the ordinance.—We hae killed a wether, and ane o' our lads has been out wi' his gun at the moss—ye used to like wild-fowl."

"Na--na—gudewife," said Caleb, "I just keekit in to wish ye joy, and I wad be glad to hae spoken wi' the gudeman, but"—— moving, as if to go away.

"The ne'er a fit ye's gang," said the elder dame, laughing and holding him fast, with a freedom which belonged to their old acquaintance; "wha kens what ill it may bring to the bairn, if ye owerlook it in that gate?"

"But I'm in a preceese hurry, gudewife," said the

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butler, suffering himself to be dragged to a seat without much resistance; "and as to eating"—for he observed the mistress of the dwelling bustling about to place a trencher for him—"as for eating—lack-a-day, we are just killed up yonder wi' eating frae morning to night—it's shamefu' epicurism; but that's what we hae gotten frae the English pock-puddings."

"Hout—never mind the English pock-puddings," said Luckie Lightbody; "try our puddings, Mr. Balderstone—there is black pudding and white-hass—try whilk ye like best."

"Baith gude—baith excellent—canna be better; but the very smell is eneugh for me that hae dined sae lately (the faithful wretch had fasted since daybreak.) But I wadna affront your housewifeskep, gudewife; and, with your permission, I'se e'en pit them in my napkin, and eat them to my supper at e'en, for I am wearied wi' Mysie's pastry and nonsense—ye ken landward dainties aye pleased me best, Marion—and landward lasses too—(looking at the cooper's wife)—Ne'er a bit but she looks far better than when she married Gilbert, and then she was the bonniest lass in our parochine and the neest till't—But gawsie cow, goodly calf."

The women smiled at the compliment each to herself, and they smiled again to each other as Caleb wrapt up the puddings in a towel which he had brought with him, as a dragoon carries his foraging bag to receive what may fall in his way.

"And what news at the Castle?" quo' the gudewife.

"News?—the bravest news ye ever heard—the Lord Keeper's up yonder wi' his fair daughter, just ready to fling her at my lord's head, if he winna take her out o' his arms; and I'se warrant he'll stitch our auld lands of Ravenswood to her petticoat tail."

"Eh! sirs—ay!—and will he hae her?—and is she weel-favoured?—and what's the colour o' her hair?—and does she wear a habit or a railly?" were the questions which the females showered upon the butler.

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"Hout tout!—it wad tak a man a day to answer a' your questions, and I hae hardly a minute. Whare's the gudeman?"

"Awa to fetch the minister," said Mrs. Girder, "precious Mr. Peter Bide-the-bent, frae the Mosshead—the honest man has the rheumatism wi' lying in the hills in the persecution."

"Ay!—a whig and a mountain-man—nae less?" said Caleb, with a peevishness he could not suppress; "I hae seen the day, Luckie, when worthy Mr. Cuffcushion and the service-book would hae served your turn, (to the elder dame,) or ony honest woman in like circumstances."

"And that's true too," said Mrs. Lightbody, "but what can a body do?—Jean maun baith sing her psalms and busk her cockernony the gate the gudeman likes, and nae ither gate, for he's maister and mair at hame, I can tell ye, Mr. Balderstone."

"Ay, ay, and does he guide the gear too?" said Caleb, to whose projects masculine rule boded little good.

"Ilka penny on't—but he'll dress her as dink as a daisy, as ye see—sae she has little reason to complain—where there's ane better aff there's ten waur."

"Aweel, gudewife," said Caleb, crest-fallen, but not beaten off, "that wasna the way ye guided your gudeman; but ilka land has its ain lauch. I maun be ganging—I just wanted to round in the gudeman's lug, that I heard them say up by yonder, that Peter Puncheon that was cooper to the Queen's stores at the Timmer Burse at Leith, is dead—sae I thought that maybe a word frae my lord to the Lord Keeper might hae served Gilbert; but since he's frae hame"——

"O but ye maun stay his hame-coming," said the dame, "I aye telled the gudeman ye meant weel to him; but he taks the tout at every bit lippening word."

"Aweel, I'll stay the last minute I can."

"And so," said the handsome young spouse of Mr. Girder, "ye think this Miss Ashton is weel-favoured?—troth, and sae should she, to set up for our young lord, with a face, and a hand, and a seat on his horse, that

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might become a king's son—d'ye ken that he aye glowers up at my window, Mr. Balderstone, when he chaunces to ride thro' the town, sae I hae a right to ken what like he is, as weel as ony body."

"I ken that brawly," said Caleb, "for I hae heard his lordship say the cooper's wife had the blackest ee in the barony; and I said, Weel may that be, my lord, for it was her mither's afore her, as I ken to my cost—Eh, Marion? Ha, ha, ha!—Ah! these were merry days!"

"Hout awa, auld carle," said the old dame, "to speak sic daffing to young folk.—But, Jean—fie, woman, dinna ye hear the bairn greet? I'se warrant it's that dreary weid[6] has come ower't again."

Up got mother and grandmother, and scoured away, jostling each other as they ran, into some remote corner of the tenement, where the young hero of the evening was deposited. When Caleb saw the coast fairly clear, he took an invigorating pinch of snuff, to sharpen and confirm his resolution.

"Cauld be my cast," thought he "if either Bide-the-bent or Girder taste that broche of wild-fowl this evening;" and then addressing the eldest turnspit, a boy of about eleven years old, and putting a penny into his hand, he said, "Here is twal pennies,* my man; carry that ower to Mrs. Sma'trash, and bid her fill my mill wi' sneeshing, and I'll turn the broche for ye in the meantime—and she will gie ye a ginge-bread snap for your pains."

No sooner was the elder boy departed on this mission, than Caleb, looking the remaining turnspit gravely and steadily in the face, removed from the fire the spit bearing the wild-fowl of which he had undertaken the charge, clapped his hat on his head, and fairly marched off with it. He stopped at the door of the Change-house only to say, in a few brief words, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw was not to expect a bed that evening in the castle.

If this message was too briefly delivered by Caleb, it

* Monetæ Scoticæ, scilicet.

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became absolute rudeness when conveyed through the medium of a suburb landlady; and Bucklaw was, as a more calm and temperate man might have been, highly incensed. Captain Craigengelt proposed, with the unanimous applause of all present, that they should course the old fox (meaning Caleb) ere he got to cover, and toss him in a blanket. But Lockhard intimated to his master's servants, and those of Lord Bittlebrains, in a tone of authority, that the slightest impertinence to the Master of Ravenswood's domestic would give Sir William Ashton the highest offence. And having so said, in a manner sufficient to prevent any aggression on their part, he left the public-house, taking along with him two servants loaded with such provisions as he had been able to procure, and overtook Caleb just when he had cleared the village.

CHAPTER XIII.

> Should I take aught of you?—'tis true I begged now;
> And what is worse than that, I stole a kindness;
> And, what is worst of all, I lost my way in't.
>
> *Wit without Money.*

The face of the little boy, sole witness of Caleb's infringement upon the laws at once of property and hospitality, would have made a good picture. He sat motionless, as if he had witnessed some of the spectral appearances which he had heard told of in a winter's evening; and as he forgot his own duty, and allowed his spit to stand still, he added to the misfortunes of the evening, by suffering the mutton to burn as black as a coal. He was first recalled from his trance of astonishment by a hearty cuff, administered by dame Lightbody, who (in whatever other respects she might conform to her name,) was a woman strong of person, and expert in

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the use of her hands, as some say her deceased husband had known to his cost.

"What gar'd ye let the roast burn, ye ill-cleckit gude-for-nought?"

"I dinna ken," said the boy.

"And where's that ill-deedy gett, Giles?"

"I dinna ken," blubbered the astonished declarant.

"And where's Mr. Balderstone?—and abune a', and in the name of council and kirk-session, that I suld say sae, where's the broche wi' the wild-fowl?"

As Mrs. Girder here entered, and joined her mother's exclamations, screaming into one ear while the old lady deafened the other, they succeeded in so utterly confounding the unhappy urchin, that he could not for some time tell his story at all, and it was only when the elder boy returned, that the truth began to dawn on their minds.

"Weel, sirs!" said Mrs. Lightbody, "wha wad hae thought o' Caleb Balderstone playing an auld acquaintance sic a pliskie!"

"O, weary on him!" said the spouse of Mr. Girder; "and what am I to say to the gudeman?—he'll brain me, if there wasna anither woman in a' Wolf's-hope."

"Hout tout, silly quean," said the mother; "na, na—it's come to muckle, but it's no come to that neither; for an he brain you he maun brain me, and I have gar'd his betters stand back—hands aff is fair play—we maun-na heed a bit flyting."

The tramp of horses now announced the arrival of the cooper with the minister. They had no sooner dismounted than they made for the kitchen fire, for the evening was cool after the thunder storm, and the woods wet and dirty. The young gudewife, strong in the charms of her Sunday gown and biggonets, threw herself in the way of receiving the first attack, while her mother, like the veteran division of the Roman legion, remained in the rear, ready to support her in case of necessity. Both hoped to protract the discovery of what had happened—the mother, by interposing her bustling person betwixt Mr. Girder and the fire, and the daughter, by the extreme cor-

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diality with which she received the minister and her husband, and the anxious fears which she expressed lest they should have "gotten cauld."

"Cauld?" quoth the husband surlily—for he was not of that class of lords and masters whose wives are viceroys over them—"we'll be cauld enough, I think, if ye dinna let us in to the fire."

And so saying, he burst his way through both lines of defence; and, as he had a careful eye over his property of every kind, he perceived at one glance the absence of the spit with its savoury burden. "What the deil, woman"——

"Fie for shame!" exclaimed both the women; "and before Mr. Bide-the-bent!"

"I stand reproved," said the cooper, "but"——

"The taking in our mouths the name of the great enemy of our souls," said Mr. Bide-the-bent——

"I stand reproved," said the cooper.

"Is an exposing ourselves to his temptations," continued the reverend monitor, "and an inviting, or, in some sort, a compelling, of him to lay aside his other trafficking with unhappy persons, and wait upon those in whose speech his name is frequent."

"Weel, weel, Mr. Bide-the-bent, can a man do mair than stand reproved?" said the cooper; "but just let me ask the women what for they hae dished the wild-fowl before we came."

"They arena dished, Gilbert," said his wife; "but—but an accident"——

"What accident?" said Girder, with flashing eyes—"nae ill come ower them, I trust? Uh?"

His wife, who stood much in awe of him, durst not reply, but her mother bustled up to her support, with arms disposed as if they were about to be a-kimbo at the next reply.—"I gied them to an acquaintance of mine, Gibbie Girder; and what about it now?"

Her excess of assurance struck Girder mute for an instant.—"And *ye* gied the wild-fowl, the best end of our christening dinner, to a friend of yours, ye auld rudas And what might his name be I pray ye?"

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"Just worthy Mr. Caleb Balderstone, frae Wolf's Crag," answered Marion, prompt and prepared for battle.

Girder's wrath foamed over all restraint. If there was a circumstance which could have added to the resentment he felt, it was, that this extravagant donation had been made in favour of our friend Caleb, towards whom, for reasons to which the reader is no stranger, he nourished a decided resentment. He raised his riding-wand against the elder matron, but she stood firm, collected in herself, and undauntedly brandished the iron ladle with which she had just been *flaming* (*anglice*, basting) the roast of mutton. Her weapon was certainly the better, and her arm not the weakest of the two; so that Gilbert thought it safest to turn short off upon his wife, who had by this time hatched a sort of hysterical whine, which greatly moved the minister, who was in fact as simple and kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed.—"And you, ye thowless jadd, to sit still and see my substance disponed upon to an idle, drunken, reprobate, worm-eaten serving-man, just because he kittles the lugs o' a silly auld wife, wi' useless clavers, and every twa words a lee?—I'll gar you as gude"——

Here the minister interposed, both by voice and action, while dame Lightbody threw herself in front of her daughter, and flourished her ladle.

"Am I no to chastise my ain wife?" exclaimed the cooper, very indignantly.

"Ye may chastise your ain wife if ye like," answered dame Lightbody; "but ye shall never lay finger on my daughter, and that ye may found upon."

"For shame, Mr. Girder!" said the clergyman; "this is what I little expected to have seen of you, that you suld give rein to your sinful passions against your nearest and your dearest; and this night too, when ye are called to the most solemn duty of a Christian parent—and a' for what? for a redundancy of creature-comforts, as worthless as they are unneedful."

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"Worthless!" exclaimed the cooper; "a better guse never walkit on stubble; twa finer dentier wild-ducks never wat a feather."

"Be it sae, neighbour," rejoined the minister; "but see what superfluities are yet revolving before your fire. I have seen the day when ten of the bannocks which stand upon that board would have been an acceptable dainty to as many men, that were starving on hills and bogs, and in caves of the earth, for the Gospel's sake."

"And that's what vexes me maist of a'," said the cooper, anxious to get some one to sympathize with his not altogether causeless anger; "an the quean had gien it to ony suffering sant, or to ony body ava but that reaving, lying, oppressing tory villain, that rade in the wicked troop of militia when it was commanded out against the sants at Bothwell Brigg by the auld tyrant Allan Ravenswood, that is gane to his place, I wad the less hae minded it. But to gie the principal part o' the feast to the like o' him!"——

"Aweel, Gilbert," said the minister, "and dinna ye see a high judgment in this?—The seed of the righteous are not seen begging their bread—think of the son of a powerful oppressor being brought to the pass of supporting his household from your fulness."

"And besides," said the wife, "it wasna for Lord Ravenswood neither, an he wad hear but a body speak—it was to help to entertain the Lord Keeper, as they ca' him, that's up yonder at Wolf's Crag."

"Sir William Ashton at Wolf's Crag!" ejaculated the astonished man of hoops and staves.

"And hand and glove wi' Lord Ravenswood," added dame Lightbody.

"Doited idiot!—that auld clavering sneck-drawer wad gar ye trow the moon is made of green cheese. The Lord Keeper and Ravenswood! they are cat and dog, hare and hound."

"I tell ye they are man and wife, and gree better than some others that are sae," retorted the mother-in-law; "forby, Peter Puncheon, that's cooper to the Queen's stores, is dead, and the place is to fill, and"——

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"Od guide us, wull ye haud your skirling tongues!" said Girder,—for we are to remark, that this explanation was given like a catch for two voices, the younger dame much encouraged by the turn of the debate, taking up, and repeating in a higher tone, the words as fast as they were uttered by her mother.

"The gudewife says naething but what's true, maister," said Girder's foreman, who had come in during the fray. 'I saw the Lord Keeper's servants drinking and driving ower at Luckie Sma'trash's ower by yonder."

"And is their maister up at Wolf's Crag?" said Girder.

"Ay, troth is he," replied his man of confidence.

"And friends wi' Ravenswood?"

"It's like sae," answered the foreman, "since he is putting up[7] wi' him."

"And Peter Puncheon's dead?"

"Ay, ay—Puncheon has leaked out at last, the auld carle," said the foreman; "mony a dribble o' brandy has gaen through him in his day.—But as for the broche and the wild-fowl, the saddle's no aff your mare yet, maister, and I could follow and bring it back, for Mr. Balderstone's no far aff the town yet."

"Do sae, Will—and come here—I'll tell ye what to do when ye owertake him."

He relieved the females of his presence, and gave Will his private instructions.

"A bonny-like thing," said the mother-in-law, as the cooper re-entered the apartment, "to send the innocent lad after an armed man, when ye ken Mr. Balderstone aye wears a rapier, and whiles a dirk into the bargain."

"I trust," said the minister, "ye have reflected weel on what ye have done, lest you should minister cause of strife, of which it is my duty to say, he who affordeth matter, albeit he himself striketh not, is in no manner guiltless."

"Never fash your beard, Mr. Bide-the-bent," replied Girder; "ane canna get their breath out here between wives and ministers—I ken best how to turn my ain cake—Jean, serve up the dinner, and nae mair about it."

Nor did he again allude to the deficiency in the course of the evening.

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Meantime, the foreman, mounted on his master's steed, and charged with his special orders, pricked swiftly forth in pursuit of the marauder Caleb. That personage, it may be imagined, did not linger by the way. He intermitted even his dearly-beloved chatter, for the purpose of making more haste—only assuring Mr. Lockhard that he had made the purveyor's wife give the wild-fowl a few turns before the fire, in case that Mysie, who had been so much alarmed by the thunder, should not have her kitchen-grate in full splendour. Meanwhile, alleging the necessity of being at Wolf's Crag as soon as possible, he pushed on so fast that his companions could scarce keep up with him. He began already to think he was safe from pursuit, having gained the summit of the swelling eminence which divides Wolf's Crag from the village, when he heard the distant tread of a horse, and a voice which shouted at intervals, "Mr. Caleb—Mr. Balderstone—Mr. Caleb Balderstone—hollo—bide a wee!"

Caleb, it may be well believed, was in no hurry to acknowledge the summons. First, he would not hear it, and faced his companions down, that it was the echo of the wind; then he said it was not worth stopping for; and, at length, halting reluctantly, as the figure of the horseman appeared through the shades of the evening, he bent up his whole soul to the task of defending his prey, threw himself into an attitude of dignity, advanced the spit, which in his grasp might with its burden seem both spear and shield, and firmly resolved to die rather than to surrender it.

What was his astonishment, when the cooper's foreman, riding up and addressing him with respect, told him, "his master was very sorry he was absent when he came to his dwelling, and grieved that he could not tarry the christening dinner, and that he had taen the freedom to send a sma' rundlet of sack, and ane anker of brandy, as he understood there were guests at the castle, and that they were short of preparation."

I have heard somewhere a story of an elderly gentleman who was pursued by a bear that had gotten loose from its muzzle, until completely exhausted. In a fit of des-

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peration, he faced round upon Bruin and lifted his cane; at the sight of which the instinct of discipline prevailed, and the animal, instead of tearing him to pieces, rose up upon his hind-legs, and instantly began to shuffle a saraband. Not less than the joyful surprise of the senior, who had supposed himself in the extremity of peril from which he was thus unexpectedly relieved, was that of our excellent friend Caleb, when he found the pursuer intended to add to his prize, instead of bereaving him of it. He recovered his latitude, however, instantly, so soon as the foreman, stooping from his nag, where he sat perched betwixt the two barrels, whispered in his ear,—"If ony thing about Peter Puncheon's place could be airted their way, John Girder wad mak it better to the Master of Ravenswood than a pair of new gloves; and that he wad be blithe to speak wi' maister Balderstone on that head, and he wad find him as pliant as a hoop-willow in a' that he could wish of him."

Caleb heard all this without rendering any answer, except that of all great men from Louis XIV. downwards, namely, "we will see about it;" and then added aloud, for the edification of Mr. Lockhard,—"Your master has acted with becoming civility and attention in forwarding the liquors, and I will not fail to represent it properly to my Lord Ravenswood. And, my lad," he said, "you may ride on to the castle, and if none of the servants are returned, whilk is to be dreaded, as they make day and night of it when they are out of sight, ye may put them into the porter's lodge, whilk is on the right hand of the great entry—the porter has got leave to go to see his friends, sae ye will meet no ane to steer ye."

The foreman, having received his orders, rode on; and having deposited the casks in the deserted and ruinous porter's lodge, he returned unquestioned by any one. Having thus executed his master's commission, and doffed his bonnet to Caleb and his company as he repassed them in his way to the village, he returned to have his share of the christening festivity.

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CHAPTER XIV.

As, to the Autumn breeze's bugle-sound,
Various and vague the dry leaves dance their round;
Or, from the garner-door, on æther borne,
The chaff flies devious from the winnow'd corn;
So vague, so devious, at the breath of heaven,
From their fix'd aim are mortal counsels driv'n.

Anonymous.

We left Caleb Balderstone in the extremity of triumph at the success of his various achievements for the honour of the house of Ravenswood. When he had mustered and marshalled his dishes of divers kinds, a more royal provision had not been seen in Wolf's Crag, since the funeral feast of its deceased lord. Great was the glory of the serving-man, as he *decored* the old oaken table with a clean cloth, and arranged upon it carbonaded venison and roasted wild-fowl, with a glance, every now and then, as if to upbraid the incredulity of his master and his guests; and with many a story, more or less true, was Lockhard that evening regaled concerning the ancient grandeur of Wolf's Crag, and the sway of its Barons over the country in their neighbourhood.

"A vassal scarce held a calf or a lamb his ain, till he had first asked if the Lord of Ravenswood was pleased to accept it; and they were obliged to ask the lord's consent before they married in these days, and mony a merry tale they tell about that right as weel as others. And although," said Caleb, "these times are not like the gude auld times, when authority had its right, yet, true it is, Mr. Lockhard, and you yoursell may partly have remarked, that we of the House of Ravenswood do our endeavour in keeping up, by all just and lawful exertion of our baronial authority, that due and fitting connection betwixt superior and vassal, whilk is in some danger of falling into desuetude,

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owing to the general license and misrule of these present unhappy times."

"Umph!" said Mr. Lockhard; "and if I may inquire, Mr. Balderstone, pray do you find your people at the village yonder amenable? for I must needs say, that at Ravenswood Castle, now pertaining to my master, the Lord Keeper, ye have not left behind ye the most compliant set of tenantry."

"Ah! but Mr. Lockhard," replied Caleb, "ye must consider there has been a change of hands, and the auld lord might expect twa turns frae them, when the new comer canna get ane. A dour and fractious set they were, thae tenants of Ravenswood, and ill to live wi' when they dinna ken their master—and if your master put them mad ance, the whole country will not put them down."

"Troth," said Mr. Lockhard, "an such be the case, I think the wisest thing for us a' wad be to hammer up a match between your young lord and our winsome young leddy up by there; and Sir William might just stitch your auld barony to her gown-sleeve, and he wad sune cuitle[9] another out o' somebody else, sic a lang head as he has."

Caleb shook his head.—"I wish," he said, "I wish that may answer, Mr. Lockhard. There are auld prophecies about this house I wad like ill to see fulfilled wi' my auld een, that has seen evil eneugh already."

"Pshaw! never mind freits," said his brother butler; "if the young folk liked ane anither, they wad make a winsome couple. But, to say truth, there is a leddy sits in our hall-nook, maun have her hand in that as weel as in every other job. But there's no harm in drinking to their healths, and I will fill Mrs. Mysie a cup of Mr. Girder's canary."

While they thus enjoyed themselves in the kitchen, the company in the hall were not less pleasantly engaged So soon as Ravenswood had determined upon giving the Lord Keeper such hospitality as he had to offer, he deemed it incumbent on him to assume the open and courteous brow of a well-pleased host. It has been often remarked,

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that when a man commences by acting a character, he frequently ends by adopting it in good earnest. In the course of an hour or two, Ravenswood, to his own surprise, found himself in the situation of one who frankly does his best to entertain welcome and honoured guests. How much of this change in his disposition was to be ascribed to the beauty and simplicity of Miss Ashton, to the readiness with which she accommodated herself to the inconveniences of her situation—how much to the smooth and plausible conversation of the Lord Keeper, remarkably gifted with those words which win the ear, must be left to the reader's ingenuity to conjecture. But Ravenswood was insensible to neither.

The Lord Keeper was a veteran statesman, well acquainted with courts and cabinets, and intimate with all the various turns of public affairs during the last eventful years of the seventeenth century. He could talk, from his own knowledge, of men and events, in a way which failed not to win attention, and had the peculiar art, while he never said a word which committed himself, at the same time to persuade the hearer that he was speaking without the least shadow of scrupulous caution or reserve. Ravenswood, in spite of his prejudices and real grounds of resentment, felt himself at once amused and instructed in listening to him, while the statesman, whose inward feelings had at first so much impeded his efforts to make himself known, had now regained all the ease and fluency of a silver-tongued lawyer of the very highest order.

His daughter did not speak much, but she smiled; and what she did say argued a submissive gentleness, and a desire to give pleasure, which, to a proud man like Ravenswood was more fascinating than the most brilliant wit. Above all, he could not but observe, that, whether from gratitude, or from some other motive, he himself, in his deserted and unprovided hall, was as much the object of respectful attention to his guests, as he would have been when surrounded by all the appliances and means of hospitality proper to his high birth. All deficiencies passed

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unobserved, or if they did not escape notice, it was to praise the substitutes which Caleb had contrived to supply the want of the usual accommodations. Where a smile was unavoidable, it was a very good-humoured one, and often coupled with some well-turned compliment, to show how much the guests esteemed the merits of their noble host, how little they thought of the inconveniences with which they were surrounded. I am not sure whether the pride of being found to outbalance, in virtue of his own personal merit, all the disadvantages of fortune, did not make as favourable an impression upon the haughty heart of the Master of Ravenswood, as the conversation of the father and the beauty of Lucy Ashton.

The hour of repose arrived. The Keeper and his daughter retired to their apartments, which were "decored" more properly than could have been anticipated. In making the necessary arrangements, Mysie had indeed enjoyed the assistance of a gossip who had arrived from the village upon an exploratory expedition, but had been arrested by Caleb, and impressed into the domestic drudgery of the evening. So that, instead of returning home to describe the dress and person of the grand young lady, she found herself compelled to be active in the domestic economy of Wolf's Crag.

According to the custom of the time, the Master of Ravenswood attended the Lord Keeper to his apartment, followed by Caleb, who placed on the table, with all the ceremonials due to torches of wax, two rudely-framed tallow-candles, such as in those days were only used by the peasantry, hooped in paltry clasps of wire, which served for candlesticks. He then disappeared, and presently entered with two earthen flagons, (the china, he said, had been little used since my lady's time,) one filled with canary wine, the other with brandy.[10] The canary sack, unheeding all probabilities of detection, he declared had been twenty years in the cellars of Wolf's Crag, "though it was not for him to speak before their honours; the brandy,—it was weel-kend liquor, as mild as mead, and

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as strong as Sampson—it had been in the house ever since the memorable revel, in which auld Micklestob had been slain at the head of the stair by Jamie of Jenklebrae, on account of the honour of the worshipful Lady Muirend, wha was in some sort an ally of the family; natheless"—

"But to cut that matter short, Mr. Caleb," said the Keeper, "perhaps you will favour me with a ewer of water."

"God forbid your lordship should drink water in this family," replied Caleb, "to the disgrace of so honourable an house!"

"Nevertheless, if his lordship have a fancy," said the Master, smiling, "I think you might indulge him; for, if I mistake not, there has been water drank here at no distant date, and with good relish too."

"To be sure, if his lordship has a fancy," said Caleb; and re-entering with a jug of pure element—"He will scarce find such water ony where as is drawn frae the well at Wolf's Crag—nevertheless"——

"Nevertheless, we must leave the Lord Keeper to his repose in this poor chamber of ours," said the Master of Ravenswood, interrupting his talkative domestic, who immediately turning to the door-way, with a profound reverence, prepared to usher his master from the secret chamber.

But the Lord Keeper prevented his host's departure.—"I have but one word to say to the Master of Ravenswood, Mr. Caleb, and I fancy he will excuse your waiting."

With a second reverence, lower than the former, Caleb withdrew—and his master stood motionless, expecting, with considerable embarrassment, what was to close the events of a day fraught with unexpected incidents.

"Master of Ravenswood," said Sir William Ashton, with some embarrassment, "I hope you understand the Christian law too well to suffer the sun to set upon your anger."

The Master blushed, and replied, "He had no occasion that evening to exercise the duty enjoined upon him by his Christian faith."

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"I should have thought otherwise," said his guest, 'considering the various subjects of dispute and litigation which have unhappily occurred more frequently than was desirable or necessary betwixt the late honourable lord, your father, and myself."

"I could wish, my lord," said Ravenswood, agitated by suppressed emotion, "that reference to these circumstances should be made anywhere rather than under my father's roof."

"I should have felt the delicacy of this appeal at another time," said Sir William Ashton, "but now I must proceed with what I mean to say.—I have suffered too much in my own mind, from the false delicacy which prevented my soliciting with earnestness, what indeed I frequently requested, a personal communing with your father—much distress of mind to him and to me might have been prevented."

"It is true," said Ravenswood, after a moment's reflection; "I have heard my father say your lordship had proposed a personal interview."

"Proposed, my dear Master? I did indeed propose it, but I ought to have begged, entreated, beseeched it. I ought to have torn away the veil which interested persons had stretched betwixt us, and shown myself as I was, willing to sacrifice a considerable part even of my legal rights in order to conciliate feelings so natural as his must be allowed to have been. Let me say for myself, my young friend, for so I will call you, that had your father and I spent the same time together which my good fortune has allowed me to-day to pass in your company, it is possible the land might yet have enjoyed one of the most respectable of its ancient nobility, and I should have been spared the pain of parting in enmity from a person whose general character I so much admired and honoured."

He put his handkerchief to his eyes. Ravenswood also was moved, but awaited in silence the progress of this extraordinary communication.

"It is necessary," continued the Lord Keeper, "and proper that you should understand, that there have been many points betwixt us, in which, although I judged it

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proper that there should be an exact ascertainment of my legal rights by the decree of a court of justice, yet it was never my intention to press them beyond the verge of equity."

"My lord," said the Master of Ravenswood, "it is unnecessary to pursue this topic farther. What the law will give you, or has given you, you enjoy—or you shall enjoy; neither my father, nor I myself, would have received any thing on the footing of favour."

"Favour?—no—you misunderstand me," resumed the Keeper; "or rather you are no lawyer. A right may be good in law, and ascertained to be so, which yet a man of honour may not in every case care to avail himself of."

"I am sorry for it, my lord," said the Master.

"Nay, nay," retorted his guest, "you speak like a young counsellor; your spirit goes before your wit. There are many things still open for decision betwixt us. Can you blame me, an old man desirous of peace, and in the castle of a young nobleman who has saved my daughter's life and my own, that I am desirous, anxiously desirous, that these should be settled on the most liberal principles?"

The old man kept fast hold of the Master's passive hand as he spoke, and made it impossible for him, be his predetermination what it would, to return any other than an acquiescent reply; and wishing his guest good-night, he postponed farther conference until the next morning.

Ravenswood hurried into the hall where he was to spend the night, and for a time traversed its pavement with a disordered and rapid pace. His mortal foe was under his roof, yet his sentiments towards him were neither those of a feudal enemy nor of a true Christian. He felt as if he could neither forgive him in the one character, nor follow forth his vengeance in the other, but that he was making a base and dishonourable composition betwixt his resentment against the father and his affection for his daughter. He cursed himself, as he hurried to and fro in the pale moonlight, and more ruddy gleams of the expiring wood-fire.

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He threw open and shut the latticed windows with violence, as if alike impatient of the admission and exclusion of free air. At length, however, the torrent of passion foamed off its madness, and he flung himself into the chair, which he proposed as his place of repose for the night.

"If, in reality,"—such were the calmer thoughts that followed the first tempest of his passion—"If, in reality, this man desires no more than the law allows him—if he is willing to adjust even his acknowledged rights upon an equitable footing, what could be my father's cause of complaint?—what is mine?—Those from whom we won our ancient possessions fell under the sword of my ancestors, and left lands and livings to the conquerors; we sink under the force of the law, now too powerful for the Scottish chivalry. Let us parley with the victors of the day, as if we had been besieged in our fortress and without hope of relief. This man may be other than I have thought him; and his daughter—but I have resolved not to think of her."

He wrapt his cloak around him, fell asleep, and dreamed of Lucy Ashton till day-light gleamed through the lattices.

CHAPTER XV.

> We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
> Past hope sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
> To lift them up, but rather set our feet
> Upon their heads to press them to the bottom,
> As I must yield with you I practised it;
> But now I see you in a way to rise,
> I can and will assist you.
>
> *New Way to Pay Old Debts.*

The Lord Keeper carried with him to a couch, harder than he was accustomed to stretch himself upon, the same ambitious thoughts and political perplexities, which drive

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sleep from the softest down that ever spread a bed of state. He had sailed long enough amid the contending tides and currents of the time to be sensible of their peril, and of the necessity of trimming his vessel to the prevailing wind, if he would have her escape shipwreck in the storm. The nature of his talents, and the timorousness of disposition connected with them, had made him assume the pliability of the versatile old Earl of Northampton, who explained the art by which he kept his ground during all the changes of state, from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Elizabeth, by the frank avowal, that he was born of the willow, not of the oak. It had accordingly been Sir William Ashton's policy, on all occasions, to watch the changes in the political horizon, and, ere yet the conflict was decided, to negociate some interest for himself with the party most likely to prove victorious. His time-serving disposition was well known, and excited the contempt of the more daring leaders of both factions in the state. But his talents were of a useful and practical kind, and his legal knowledge held in high estimation; and they so far counterbalanced other deficiencies, that those in power were glad to use and to reward, though without absolutely trusting or greatly respecting him.

The Marquis of A—— had used his utmost influence to effect a change in the Scottish cabinet, and his schemes had been of late so well laid and so ably supported, that there appeared a very great chance of his proving ultimately successful. He did not, however, feel so strong or so confident as to neglect any means of drawing recruits to his standard. The acquisition of the Lord Keeper was deemed of some importance, and a friend, perfectly acquainted with his circumstances and character, became responsible for his political conversion.

When this gentleman arrived at Ravenswood Castle upon a visit, the real purpose of which was disguised under general courtesy, he found the prevailing fear, which at present beset the Lord Keeper, was that of danger to his own person from the Master of Ravenswood. The language which the blind sibyl, old Alice, had used; the

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sudden appearance of the Master, armed, and within his precincts, immediately after he had been warned against danger from him; the cold and haughty return received in exchange for the acknowledgments with which he loaded him for his timely protection, had all made a strong impression on his imagination.

So soon as the Marquis's political agent found how the wind sat, he began to insinuate fears and doubts of another kind, scarce less calculated to affect the Lord Keeper. He inquired with seeming interest, whether the proceedings in Sir William's complicated litigation with the Ravenswood family was out of court, and settled without the possibility of appeal? The Lord Keeper answered in the affirmative; but his interrogator was too well informed to be imposed upon. He pointed out to him by unanswerable arguments, that some of the most important points which had been decided in his favour against the House of Ravenswood, were liable under the Treaty of Union, to be reviewed by the British House of Peers, a court of equity of which the Lord Keeper felt an instinctive dread. This course came instead of an appeal to the old Scottish Parliament, or, as it was technically termed, "a protestation for remeid in law."

The Lord Keeper, after he had for some time disputed the legality of such a proceeding, was compelled, at length, to comfort himself with the improbability of the young Master of Ravenswood's finding friends in Parliament, capable of stirring in so weighty an affair.

"Do not comfort yourself with that false hope," said his wily friend; "it is possible, that, in the next session of Parliament, young Ravenswood may find more friends and favour even than your lordship."

"That would be a sight worth seeing," said the Keeper scornfully.

"And yet," said his friend, such things have been seen ere now, and in our own time. There are many at the head of affairs even now, that a few years ago were under hiding for their lives; and many a man now dines on plate of silver, that was fain to eat his crowdy without a bicker; and many a high head has been brought full low among us in as short a space. Scott of Scotstarvet's

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'Staggering State of Scots Statesmen,' of which curious memoir you showed me a manuscript, has been out-staggered in our time."

The Lord Keeper answered with a deep sigh, "that these mutations were no new sights in Scotland, and had been witnessed long before the time of the satirical author he had quoted. It was many a long year," he said "since Fordun had quoted as an ancient proverb, '*neque dives, neque fortis, sed nec sapiens Scotus, prædominante invidia, diu durabit in terra.*'"

"And be assured, my esteemed friend," was the answer, "that even your long services to the state, or deep legal knowledge, will not save you, or render your estate stable, if the Marquis of A—— comes in with a party in the British Parliament. You know that the deceased Lord Ravenswood was his near ally, his lady being fifth in descent from the Knight of Tillibardine; and I am well assured that he will take young Ravenswood by the hand, and be his very good lord and kinsman. Why should he not?—The Master is an active and stirring young fellow, able to help himself with tongue and hands; and it is such as he that finds friends among their kindred, and not those unarmed and unable Mephibosheths, that are sure to be a burden to every one that takes them up. And so, if these Ravenswood cases be called over the coals in the House of Peers, you will find that the Marquis will have a crow to pluck with you."

"That would be an evil requital," said the Lord Keeper, "for my long services to the state, and the ancient respect in which I have held his lordship's honourable family and person."

"Ay, but," rejoined the agent of the Marquis, "it is in vain to look back on past service and auld respect, my lord—it will be present service and immediate proofs of regard, which, in these sliddery times, will be expected by a man like the Marquis."

The Lord Keeper now saw the full drift of his friend's argument, but he was too cautious to return any positive answer.

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"He knew not," he said, "the service which the Lord Marquis could expect from one of his limited abilities, that had not always stood at his command, still saving and reserving his duty to his king and country."

Having thus said nothing, while he seemed to say every thing, for the exception was calculated to cover whatever he might afterwards think proper to bring under it, Sir William Ashton changed the conversation, nor did he again permit the same topic to be introduced. His guest departed, without having brought the wily old statesman the length of committing himself, or of pledging himself to any future line of conduct, but with the certainty that he had alarmed his fears in a most sensible point, and laid a foundation for future and farther treaty.

When he rendered an account of his negotiation to the Marquis, they both agreed that the Keeper ought not to be permitted to relapse into security, and that he should be plied with new subjects of alarm, especially during the absence of his lady. They were well aware that her proud, vindictive, and predominating spirit, would be likely to supply him with the courage in which he was deficient —that she was immovably attached to the party now in power, with whom she maintained a close correspondence and alliance, and that she hated, without fearing, the Ravenswood family, (whose more ancient dignity threw discredit on the newly acquired grandeur of her husband,) to such a degree, that she would have perilled the interest of her own house, to have the prospect of altogether crushing that of her enemy.

But Lady Ashton was now absent. The business which had long detained her in Edinburgh, had afterwards induced her to travel to London, not without the hope that she might contribute her share to disconcert the intrigues of the Marquis at court; for she stood high in favour with the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, to whom, in point of character, she bore considerable resemblance. It was necessary to press her husband hard before her return; and, as a preparatory step, the Marquis wrote to the Master of Ravenswood the letter

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which we rehearsed in a former chapter. It was cautiously worded, so as to leave it in the power of the writer hereafter to take as deep, or as slight an interest in the fortunes of his kinsman, as the progress of his own schemes might require. But however unwilling, as a statesman, the Marquis might be to commit himself, or assume the character of a patron, while he had nothing to give away, it must be said to his honour, that he felt a strong inclination effectually to befriend the Master of Ravenswood, as well as to use his name as a means of alarming the terrors of the Lord Keeper.

As the messenger who carried this letter was to pass near the house of the Lord Keeper, he had it in direction, that in the village adjoining to the park-gate of the castle, his horse should lose a shoe, and that, while it was replaced by the smith of the place, he should express the utmost regret for the necessary loss of time, and in the vehemence of his impatience, give it to be understood, that he was bearing a message from the Marquis of A—— to the Master of Ravenswood, upon a matter of life and death.

This news, with exaggerations, was speedily carried from various quarters to the ears of the Lord Keeper, and each reporter dwelt upon the extreme impatience of the courier, and the surprising short time in which he had executed his journey. The anxious statesman heard in silence; but in private Lockhard received orders to watch the courier on his return, to way-lay him in the village, to ply him with liquor if possible, and to use all means fair or foul to learn the contents of the letter of which he was the bearer. But as this plot had been foreseen, the messenger returned by a different and distant road, and thus escaped the snare that was laid for him.

After he had been in vain expected for some time, Mr. Dingwall had orders to make especial inquiry among his clients of Wolf's-hope, whether such a domestic belonging to the Marquis of A—— had actually arrived at the neighbouring castle. This was easily ascertained; for Caleb had been in the village one morning by five o'clock,

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to borrow "twa chappins of ale and a kipper" for the messenger's refreshment, and the poor fellow had been ill for twenty-four hours at Luckie Sma'trash's, in consequence of dining upon "saut saumon and sour drink." So that the existence of a correspondence betwixt the Marquis and his distressed kinsman, which Sir William Ashton had sometimes treated as a bugbear, was proved beyond the possibility of further doubt.

The alarm of the Lord Keeper became very serious. Since the claim of right, the power of appealing from the decisions of the civil court to the Estates of Parliament, which had formerly been held incompetent, had in many instances been claimed, and in some allowed, and he had no small reason to apprehend the issue, if the English House of Lords should be disposed to act upon an appeal from the Master of Ravenswood "for remeid in law." It would resolve into an equitable claim, and be decided, perhaps, upon the broad principles of justice, which were not quite so favourable to the Lord Keeper as those of strict law. Besides, judging, though most inaccurately, from courts which he had himself known in the unhappy times preceding the Scottish Union, the Keeper might have too much right to think, that in the House to which his lawsuits were to be transferred, the old maxim might prevail in Scotland which was too well recognized in former times,— "Show me the man, and I'll show you the law." The high and unbiassed character of English judicial proceedings was then little known in Scotland; and the extension of them to that country was one of the most valuable advantages which it gained by the Union. But this was a blessing which the Lord Keeper, who had lived under another system, could not have the means of foreseeing. In the loss of his political consequence, he anticipated the loss of his lawsuit. Meanwhile, every report which reached him served to render the success of the Marquis's intrigues the more probable, and the Lord Keeper began to think it indispensable, that he should look round for some kind of protection against the coming storm. The timidity of his temper induced him to adopt measures of compromise and conciliation. The affair of the wild bull, properly managed,

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might, he thought, be made to facilitate a personal communication and reconciliation betwixt the Master and himself. He would then learn, if possible, what his own ideas were of the extent of his rights, and the means of enforcing them; and perhaps matters might be brought to a compromise, where one party was wealthy, and the other so very poor. A reconciliation with Ravenswood was likely to give him an opportunity to play his own game with the Marquis of A——. "And besides," said he to himself, "it will be an act of generosity to raise up the heir of this distressed family; and if he is to be warmly and effectually befriended by the new government, who knows but my virtue may prove its own reward?"

Thus thought Sir William Ashton, covering with no unusual self-delusion, his interested views with a hue of virtue; and having attained this point, his fancy strayed still farther. He began to bethink himself, "that if Ravenswood was to have a distinguished place of power and trust —and if such a union would sopite the heavier part of his unadjusted claims—there might be worse matches for his daughter Lucy—the Master might be reponed against the attainder—Lord Ravenswood was an ancient title, and the alliance would, in some measure, legitimate his own possession of the greater part of the Master's spoils, and make the surrender of the rest a subject of less bitter regret."

With these mingled and multifarious plans occupying his head, the Lord Keeper availed himself of my Lord Bittlebrains' repeated invitation to his residence, and thus came within a very few miles of Wolf's Crag. Here he found the lord of the mansion absent, but was courteously received by the lady, who expected her husband's immediate return. She expressed her particular delight at seeing Miss Ashton, and appointed the hounds to be taken out for the Lord Keeper's special amusement. He readily entered into the proposal, as giving him an opportunity to reconnoitre Wolf's Crag, and perhaps to make some acquaintance with the owner, if he should be tempted from his desolate mansion by the chase. Lockhard had his orders to endeavour on his part to make

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some acquaintance with the inmates of the castle, and we have seen how he played his part.

The accidental storm did more to further the Lord Keeper's plan of forming a personal acquaintance with young Ravenswood, than his most sanguine expectations could have anticipated. His fear of the young nobleman's personal resentment had greatly decreased, since he considered him as formidable from his legal claims, and the means he might have of enforcing them. But although he thought, not unreasonably, that only desperate circumstances drove men on desperate measures, it was not without a secret terror, which shook his heart within him, that he first felt himself enclosed within the desolate tower of Wolf's Crag; a place so well fitted, from solitude and strength, to be a scene of violence and vengeance. The stern reception at first given to them by the Master of Ravenswood, and the difficulty he felt in explaining to that injured nobleman what guests were under the shelter of his roof, did not soothe these alarms; so that when Sir William Ashton heard the door of the court-yard shut behind him with violence, the words of Alice rung in his ears, "that he had drawn on matters too hardly with so fierce a race as those of Ravenswood, and that they would bide their time to be avenged."

The subsequent frankness of the Master's hospitality, as their acquaintance increased, abated the apprehensions these recollections were calculated to excite; and it did not escape Sir William Ashton, that it was to Lucy's grace and beauty he owed the change in their host's behaviour.

All these thoughts thronged upon him when he took possession of the secret chamber. The iron lamp, the unfurnished apartment, more resembling a prison than a place of ordinary repose, the hoarse and ceaseless sound of the waves rushing against the base of the rock on which the castle was founded, saddened and perplexed his mind. To his own successful machinations, the ruin of the family had been in a great measure owing, but his disposition was crafty and not cruel; so that actually to witness the desolation and distress he had himself occasioned, was

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as painful to him as it would be to the humane mistress of a family to superintend in person the execution of the lambs and poultry which are killed by her own directions. At the same time, when he thought of the alternative, of restoring to Ravenswood a large proportion of his spoils, or of adopting, as an ally and member of his own family, the heir of this impoverished house, he felt as the spider may be supposed to do, when his whole web, the intricacies of which had been planned with so much art, is destroyed by the chance sweep of a broom. And then, if he should commit himself too far in this matter, it gave rise to a perilous question, which many a good husband, when under temptation to act as a free agent, has asked himself without being able to return a satisfactory answer; "What will my wife—what will Lady Ashton say?" On the whole, he came at length to the resolution in which minds of a weaker cast so often take refuge. He resolved to watch events, to take advantage of circumstances as they occurred, and regulate his conduct accordingly. In this spirit of temporizing policy, he at length composed his mind to rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A slight note I have about me for you, for the delivery of which you must excuse me. It is an offer that friendship calls upon me to do, and no way offensive to you, since I desire nothing but right upon both sides."

King and no King.

When Ravenswood and his guest met in the morning, the gloom of the Master's spirit had in part returned. He, also, had passed a night rather of reflection than of slumber; and the feelings which he could not but entertain towards Lucy Ashton, had to support a severe conflict against those which he had so long nourished against her father. To clasp in friendship the hand of the enemy of his house, to entertain him under his roof, to exchange with him the courtesies and the kindness of domestic familiarity, was a degradation which his proud spirit could not be bent to without a struggle.

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But the ice being once broken, the Lord Keeper was resolved it should not have time again to freeze. It had been part of his plan to stun and confuse Ravenswood's ideas, by a complicated and technical statement of the matters which had been in debate betwixt their families, justly thinking that it would be difficult for a youth of his age to follow the expositions of a practical lawyer, concerning actions of compt and reckoning, and of multiple poindings, and adjudications and wadsets, proper and improper, and poindings of the ground and declarations of the expiry of the legal. Thus, thought Sir William, I shall have all the grace of appearing perfectly communicative while my party will derive very little advantage from anything I may tell him. He therefore took Ravenswood aside into the deep recess of a window in the hall, and resuming the discourse of the preceding evening, expressed a hope that his young friend would assume some patience, in order to hear him enter into a minute and explanatory detail of those unfortunate circumstances, in which his late honourable father had stood at variance with the Lord Keeper. The Master of Ravenswood coloured highly, but was silent; and the Lord Keeper, though not greatly approving the sudden heightening of his auditor's complexion, commenced the history of a bond for twenty thousand marks, advanced by his father to the father of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and was proceeding to detail the executorial proceedings by which this large sum had been rendered a *debitum fundi*, when he was interrupted by the Master.

"It is not in this place," he said, "that I can hear Sir William Ashton's explanation of the matters in question between us. It is not here, where my father died of a broken heart, that I can with decency or temper investigate the cause of his distress. I might remember that I was a son, and forget the duties of a host. A time, however, there must come, when these things shall be discussed in a place and in a presence where both of us will have equal freedom to speak and to hear."

"Any time," the Lord Keeper said, "any place was alike to those who sought nothing but justice. Yet it

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would seem he was in fairness, entitled to some premonition respecting the grounds upon which the Master proposed to impugn the whole train of legal proceedings, which had been so well and ripely advised in the only courts competent."

"Sir William Ashton," answered the Master with warmth, "the lands which you now occupy were granted to my remote ancestor for services done with his sword against the English invaders. How they have glided from us by a train of proceedings that seem to be neither sale, nor mortgage, nor adjudication for debt, but a non-descript and entangled mixture of all these rights —how annual-rent has been accumulated upon principal, and no nook or coign of legal advantage left unoccupied, until our interest in our hereditary property seems to have melted away like an icicle in thaw—all this you understand better than I do. I am willing, however, to suppose, from the frankness of your conduct towards me, that I may in a great measure have mistaken your personal character, and that things may have appeared right and fitting to you, a skilful and practised lawyer, which to my ignorant understanding seem very little short of injustice and gross oppression."

"And you, my dear Master," answered Sir William, "you, permit me to say, have been equally misrepresented to me. I was taught to believe you a fierce, imperious, hot-headed youth, ready, at the slightest provocation, to throw your sword into the scales of justice, and to appeal to those rude and forcible measures from which civil polity has long protected the people of Scotland. Then, since we were mutually mistaken in each other, why should not the young nobleman be willing to listen to the old lawyer, while, at least, he explains the points of difference betwixt them?"

"No, my lord," answered Ravenswood; "it is in the House of British Peers,[11] whose honour must be equal to their rank—it is in the court of last resort that we must parley together. The belted lords of Britain, her ancient peers, must decide, if it is their will that a house, not the least noble of their members, shall be stripped of their possessions, the reward of the patriotism of generations, as

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the pawn of a wretched mechanic becomes forfeit to the usurer the instant the hour of redemption has passed away. If they yield to the grasping severity of the creditor, and to the gnawing usury that eats into our lands as moths into a raiment, it will be of more evil consequence to them and their posterity than to Edgar Ravenswood—I shall still have my sword and my cloak, and can follow the profession of arms wherever a trumpet shall sound."

As he pronounced these words, in a firm yet melancholy tone, he raised his eyes, and suddenly encountered those of Lucy Ashton, who had stolen unawares on their interview, and observed her looks fastened on them with an expression of enthusiastic interest and admiration, which had wrapt her for the moment beyond the fear of discovery. The noble form and fine features of Ravenswood, fired with the pride of birth and sense of internal dignity—the mellow and expressive tones of his voice, the desolate state of his fortunes, and the indifference with which he seemed to endure and to dare the worst that might befall, rendered him a dangerous object of contemplation for a maiden already too much disposed to dwell upon recollections connected with him. When their eyes encountered each other, both blushed deeply, conscious of some strong internal emotion, and shunned again to meet each other's look.

Sir William Ashton had, of course, closely watched the expression of their countenances. "I need fear," said he internally, "neither Parliament nor protestation; I have an effectual mode of reconciling myself with this hot-tempered young fellow, in case he shall become formidable. The present object is, at all events, to avoid committing ourselves. The hook is fixed; we will not strain the line too soon—it is as well to reserve the privilege of slipping it loose, if we do not find the fish worth landing."

In this selfish and cruel calculation upon the supposed attachment of Ravenswood to Lucy, he was so far from considering the pain he might give to the former, by thus dallying with his affections, that he even did not think

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upon the risk of involving his own daughter in the perils of an unfortunate passion; as if her predilection, which could not escape his attention, were like the flame of a taper, which might be lighted or extinguished at pleasure. But Providence had prepared a dreadful requital for this keen observer of human passions, who had spent his life in securing advantages to himself by artfully working upon the passions of others.

Caleb Balderstone now came to announce that breakfast was prepared; for in those days of substantial feeding, the reliques of the supper amply furnished forth the morning meal. Neither did he forget to present to the Lord Keeper, with great reverence, a morning-draught in a large pewter cup, garnished with leaves of parsley and scurvy-grass. He craved pardon, of course, for having omitted to serve it in the great silver standing cup as behoved, being that it was at present in a silversmith's in Edinburgh, for the purpose of being overlaid with gilt.

"In Edinburgh like enough," said Ravenswood; "but in what place, or for what purpose, I am afraid neither you nor I know."

"Aweel!" said Caleb peevishly, "there's a man standing at the gate already this morning—that's ae thing that I ken—Does your honour ken whether ye will speak wi' him or no?"

"Does he wish to speak with me, Caleb?"

"Less will no serve him," said Caleb; "but ye had best take a visie of him through the wicket before opening the gate—it's no every ane we suld let into this castle."

"What! do you suppose him to be a messenger come to arrest me for debt?" said Ravenswood.

"A messenger arrest your honour for debt, and in your Castle of Wolf's Crag!—Your honour is jesting wi' auld Caleb this morning." However, he whispered in his ear as he followed him out, "I would be loath to do ony decent man a prejudice in your honour's gude opinion; but I would tak twa looks o' that chield before I let him within these walls."

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He was not an officer of the law, however; being no less a person than Captain Craigengelt, with his nose as red as a comfortable cup of brandy could make it, his laced cocked-hat set a little aside upon the top of his black riding periwig, a sword by his side, and pistols at his holsters, and his person arrayed in a riding suit, laid over with tarnished lace,—the very moral of one who would say, Stand, to a true man.

When the Master had recognized him, he ordered the gates to be opened. "I suppose," he said, "Captain Craigengelt, there are no such weighty matters betwixt you and me, but may be discussed in this place. I have company in the castle at present, and the terms upon which we last parted must excuse my asking you to make part of them."

Craigengelt, although possessing the very perfection of impudence, was somewhat abashed by this unfavourable reception. "He had no intention," he said, "to force himself upon the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality—he was in the honourable service of bearing a message to him from a friend, otherwise the Master of Ravenswood should not have had reason to complain of this intrusion."

"Let it be short, sir," said the Master, "for that will be the best apology. Who is the gentleman who is so fortunate as to have your services as a messenger?"

"My friend Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," answered Craigengelt, with conscious importance, and that confidence which the acknowledged courage of his principal inspired, "who conceives himself to have been treated by you with something much short of the respect which he had reason to demand, and therefore is resolved to exact satisfaction. I bring with me," said he, taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, "the precise length of his sword; and he requests you will meet him, accompanied by a friend, and equally armed, at any place within a mile of the castle, when I shall give attendance as umpire or second on his behoof."

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"Satisfaction—and equal arms?" repeated Ravenswood, who, the reader will recollect, had no reason to suppose he had given the slightest offence to his late inmate—"upon my word, Captain Craigengelt, either you have invented the most improbable falsehood that ever came into the mind of such a person, or your morning-draught has been somewhat of the strongest. What could persuade Bucklaw to send me such a message?"

"For that, sir," replied Craigengelt, "I am desired to refer you to what, in duty to my friend, I am to term your inhospitality in excluding him from your house, without reasons assigned."

"It is impossible," replied the Master; "he cannot be such a fool as to interpret actual necessity as an insult. Nor do I believe, that, knowing my opinion of you, captain, he would have employed the services of so slight and inconsiderable a person as yourself upon such an errand, as I certainly could expect no man of honour to act with you in the office of umpire."

"I slight and inconsiderable!" said Craigengelt, raising his voice, and laying his hand on his cutlass; "if it were not that the quarrel of my friend craves the precedence, and is in dependence before my own, I would give you to understand"——

"I can understand nothing upon your explanation, Captain Craigengelt. Be satisfied of that, and oblige me with your departure."

"D——n!" muttered the bully; "and is this the answer which I am to carry back to an honourable message?"

"Tell the Laird of Bucklaw," answered Ravenswood, "if you are really sent by him, that when he sends me his cause of grievance by a person fitting to carry such an errand betwixt him and me, I will either explain it or maintain it."

"Then, Master, you will at least cause to be returned to Hayston, by my hands, his property which is remaining in your possession."

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"Whatever property Bucklaw may have left behind him, sir," replied the Master, "shall be returned to him by my servant, as you do not show me any credentials from him which entitle you to receive it."

"Well, Master," said Captain Craigengelt, with malice which even his fear of the consequences could not suppress,—"you have this morning done me an egregious wrong and dishonour, but far more to yourself. A castle indeed!" he continued, looking around him; "why this is worse than a *coupe-gorge* house, where they receive travellers to plunder them of their property."

"You insolent rascal," said the Master, raising his cane, and making a grasp at the captain's bridle, "if you do not depart without uttering another syllable, I will batoon you to death!"

At the motion of the Master towards him, the bully turned so rapidly round, that with some difficulty he escaped throwing down his horse, whose hoofs struck fire from the rocky pavement in every direction. Recovering him, however, with the bridle, he pushed for the gate, and rode sharply back again in the direction of the village.

As Ravenswood turned round to leave the court-yard after this dialogue, he found that the Lord Keeper had descended from the hall, and witnessed, though at the distance prescribed by politeness, his interview with Craigengelt.

"I have seen," said the Lord Keeper, "that gentleman's face, and at no great distance of time—his name is Craig—Craig—something, is it not?"

"Craigengelt is the fellow's name," said the Master, "at least that by which he passes at present."

"Craig-in-guilt," said Caleb, punning upon the word *craig*, which in Scotch signifies throat; "if he is Craig-in-guilt just now, he is as likely to be Craig-in-peril as ony chield I ever saw—the loon has woodie written on his very visnomy, and I wad wager twa and a plack that hemp plaits his cravat yet."

"You understand physiognomy, good Mr. Caleb," said the Keeper, smiling; "I assure you the gentleman

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has been near such a consummation before now—for I most distinctly recollect, that, upon occasion of a journey which I made about a fortnight ago to Edinburgh, I saw Mr. Craigengelt, or whatever is his name, undergo a severe examination before the Privy Council."

"Upon what account?" said the Master of Ravenswood, with some interest.

The question led immediately to a tale which the Lord Keeper had been very anxious to introduce, when he could find a graceful and fitting opportunity. He took hold of the Master's arm, and led him back towards the hall. "The answer to your question," he said, "though it is a ridiculous business, is only fit for your own ear."

As they entered the hall, he again took the Master apart into one of the recesses of the window, where it will be easily believed that Miss Ashton did not venture again to intrude upon their conference.

CHAPTER XVII.

> ——— Here is a father now,
> Will truck his daughter for a foreign venture,
> Make her the stop-gap to some cankered feud,
> Or fling her o'er, like Jonah, to the fishes,
> To appease the sea at highest.
>
> *Anonymous.*

The Lord Keeper opened his discourse with an appearance of unconcern, marking, however, very carefully, the effect of his communication upon young Ravenswood.

"You are aware," he said, "my young friend, that suspicion is the natural vice of our unsettled times, and exposes the best and wisest of us to the imposition of artful rascals. If I had been disposed to listen to such the other day, or even if I had been the wily politician

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which you have been taught to believe me, you, Master of Ravenswood, instead of being at freedom, and with full liberty to solicit and act against me as you please, in defence of what you suppose to be your rights, would have been in the Castle of Edinburgh, or some other state prison; or, if you had escaped that destiny, it must have been by flight to a foreign country, and at the risk of a sentence of fugitation."

"My Lord Keeper," said the Master, "I think you would not jest on such a subject—yet it seems impossible you can be in earnest."

"Innocence," said the Lord Keeper, "is also confident, and sometimes, though very excusably, presumptuously so."

"I do not understand," said Ravenswood, "how a consciousness of innocence can be, in any case, accounted presumptuous."

"Imprudent, at least, it may be called," said Sir William Ashton, "since it is apt to lead us into the mistake of supposing that sufficiently evident to others, of which, in fact, we are only conscious ourselves. I have known a rogue, for this very reason, make a better defence than an innocent man could have done in the same circumstances of suspicion. Having no consciousness of innocence to support him, such a fellow applies himself to all the advantages which the law will afford him, and sometimes (if his counsel be men of talent,) succeeds in compelling his judges to receive him as innocent. I remember the celebrated case of Sir Coolie Condiddle, of Condiddle, who was tried for theft under trust, of which all the world knew him guilty, and yet was not only acquitted, but lived to sit in judgment on honester folk."

"Allow me to beg you will return to the point," said the Master; "you seemed to say that I had suffered under some suspicion."

"Suspicion, Master ?—ay, truly—and I can show you the proofs of it; if I happen only to have them with me. Here, Lockhard"—His attendant came—"Fetch me the

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little private mail with the padlocks, that I recommended to your particular charge—d'ye hear?"

"Yes, my lord." Lockhard vanished; and the Keeper continued as if half speaking to himself.

"I think the papers are with me—I think so, for as I was to be in this country, it was natural for me to bring them with me. I have them, however, at Ravenswood Castle, that I am sure of—so perhaps you might condescend"——

Here Lockhard entered, and put the leathern scrutoire, or mail-box, into his hands. The Keeper produced one or two papers, respecting the information laid before the Privy Council concerning the riot, as it was termed, at the funeral of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and the active share he had himself taken in quashing the proceedings against the Master. These documents had been selected with care, so as to irritate the natural curiosity of Ravenswood upon such a subject, without gratifying it, yet to show that Sir William Ashton had acted upon that trying occasion the part of an advocate and peace-maker betwixt him and the jealous authorities of the day. Having furnished his host with such subjects for examination, the Lord Keeper went to the breakfast-table, and entered into light conversation, addressed partly to old Caleb, whose resentment against the usurper of the Castle of Ravenswood began to be softened by his familiarity, and partly to his daughter.

After perusing these papers, the Master of Ravenswood remained for a minute or two with his hand pressed against his brow, in deep and profound meditation. He then again ran his eye hastily over the papers, as if desirous of discovering in them some deep purpose, or some mark of fabrication, which had escaped him at first perusal. Apparently the second reading confirmed the opinion which had pressed upon him at the first, for he started from the stone-bench on which he was sitting, and, going to the Lord Keeper, took his hand, and, strongly pressing it, asked his pardon repeatedly for the injustice he had done him, when it appeared he was experiencing, at his

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hands, the benefit of protection to his person, and vindication to his character.

The statesman received these acknowledgments at first with well-feigned surprise, and then with an affectation of frank cordiality. The tears began already to start from Lucy's blue eyes at viewing this unexpected and moving scene. To see the Master, late so haughty and reserved, and whom she had always supposed the injured person, supplicating her father for forgiveness, was a change at once surprising, flattering, and affecting.

"Dry your eyes, Lucy," said her father; "why should you weep, because your father, though a lawyer, is discovered to be a fair and honourable man?—What have you to thank me for, my dear Master," he continued, addressing Ravenswood, "that you would not have done in my case? '*Suum cuique tribuito*,' was the Roman justice, and I learned it when I studied Justinian. Besides, have you not overpaid me a thousand times in saving the life of this dear child?"

"Yes," answered the Master, in all the remorse of self-accusation; "but the little service *I* did was an act of mere brutal instinct; *your* defence of my cause, when you knew how ill I thought of you, and how much I was disposed to be your enemy, was an act of generous, manly, and considerate wisdom."

"Pshaw!" said the Lord Keeper, "each of us acted in his own way; you as a gallant soldier, I as an upright judge and privy-counsellor. We could not, perhaps, have changed parts—at least I should have made a very sorry *Tauridor*, and you, my good Master, though your cause is so excellent, might have pleaded it perhaps worse yourself, than I who acted for you before the council."

"My generous friend!" said Ravenswood;—and with that brief word, which the Keeper had often lavished upon him, but which he himself now pronounced for the first time, he gave to his feudal enemy the full confidence of an haughty but honourable heart. The Master had been remarked among his contemporaries for sense and acuteness, as

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well as for his reserved, pertinacious, and irascible character. His prepossessions accordingly, however obstinate, were of a nature to give way before love and gratitude; and the real charms of the daughter, joined to the supposed services of the father, cancelled in his memory the vows of vengeance which he had taken so deeply on the eve of his father's funeral. But they had been heard and registered in the book of fate.

Caleb was present at this singular scene, and he could conceive no other reason for a proceeding so extraordinary than an alliance betwixt the houses, and Ravenswood Castle assigned for the young lady's dowry. As for Lucy, when Ravenswood uttered the most passionate excuses for his ungrateful negligence, she could but smile through her tears, and, as she abandoned her hand to him, assure him, in broken accents, of the delight with which she beheld the complete reconciliation between her father and her deliverer. Even the statesman was moved and affected by the fiery, unreserved, and generous self-abandonment with which the Master of Ravenswood renounced his feudal enmity, and threw himself without hesitation upon his forgiveness. His eyes glistened as he looked upon a couple who were obviously becoming attached, and who seemed made for each other. He thought how high the proud and chivalrous character of Ravenswood might rise under many circumstances, in which *he* found himself "over-crowed," to use a phrase of Spencer, and kept under, by his brief pedigree, and timidity of disposition. Then his daughter—his favourite child—his constant play-mate—seemed formed to live happy in a union with such a commanding spirit as Ravenswood; and even the fine, delicate, fragile form of Lucy Ashton seemed to require the support of the Master's muscular strength and masculine character. And it was not merely during a few minutes that Sir William Ashton looked upon their marriage as a probable and even desirable event, for a full hour intervened ere his imagination was crossed by recollection of the Master's poverty, and the sure displeasure of Lady Ashton. It is cer-

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tain, that the very unusual flow of kindly feeling with which the Lord Keeper had been thus surprised, was one of the circumstances which gave much tacit encouragement to the attachment between the Master and his daughter, and led both the lovers distinctly to believe that it was a connection which would be most agreeable to him. He himself was supposed to have admitted this in effect, when, long after the catastrophe of their love, he used to warn his hearers against permitting their feelings to obtain an ascendancy over their judgment, and affirm that the greatest misfortune of his life was owing to a very temporary predominance of sensibility over self-interest. It must be owned, if such was the case, he was long and severely punished for an offence of very brief duration.

After some pause, the Lord Keeper resumed the conversation.—" In your surprise at finding me an honester man than you expected, you have lost your curiosity about this Craigengelt, my good Master ; and yet your name was brought in, in the course of that matter too."

" The scoundrel !" said Ravenswood ; " my connection with him was of the most temporary nature possible ; and yet I was very foolish to hold any communication with him at all.—What did he say of me ?"

" Enough," said the Keeper, " to excite the very loyal terrors of some of our sages, who are for proceeding against men on the mere grounds of suspicion or mercenary information.—Some nonsense about your proposing to enter into the service of France, or of the Pretender, I don't recollect which, but which the Marquis of A——, one of your best friends, and another person, whom some call one of your worst and most interested enemies, could not, some how, be brought to listen to."

" I am obliged to my honourable friend—and yet"—shaking the Lord Keeper's hand—" and yet I am still more obliged to my honourable enemy."

" *Inimicus amicissimus*," said the Lord Keeper, returning the pressure ; " but this gentleman—this Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw—I am afraid the poor young man—I

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heard the fellow mention his name—is under very bad guidance."

"He is old enough to govern himself," answered the Master.

"Old enough, perhaps, but scarce wise enough, if he has chosen this fellow for his *fidus Achates*. Why, he lodged an information against him—that is, such a consequence might have ensued from his examination, had we not looked rather at the character of the witness than the tenor of his evidence."

"Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw," said the Master, "is, I believe, a most honourable man, and capable of nothing that is mean or disgraceful."

"Capable of much that is unreasonable, though; that you must needs allow, Master. Death will soon put him in possession of a fair estate, if he hath it not already; old Lady Girnington—an excellent person, excepting that her inveterate ill-nature rendered her intolerable to the whole world—is probably dead by this time. Six heirs portioners have successively died to make her wealthy. I know the estates well; they march[12] with my own—a noble property."

"I am glad of it," said Ravenswood, "and should be more so, were I confident that Bucklaw would change his company and habits with his fortunes. This appearance of Craigengelt, acting in the capacity of his friend, is a most vile augury for his future respectability."

"He is a bird of evil omen, to be sure," said the Keeper, "and croaks of jail and gallows-tree.—But I see Mr. Caleb grows impatient for our return to breakfast."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Sir, stay at home and take an old man's counsel;
Seek not to bask you by a stranger's hearth;
Our own blue smoke is warmer than their fire.
Domestic food is wholesome, though 'tis homely,
And foreign dainties poisonous, though tasteful.

The French Courtezan.

THE Master of Ravenswood took an opportunity to leave his guests to prepare for their departure, while he himself made the brief arrangements necessary previous to his absence from Wolf's Crag for a day or two. It was necessary to communicate with Caleb on this occasion, and he found that faithful servitor in his sooty and ruinous den, greatly delighted with the departure of their visiters, and computing how long, with good management, the provisions which had been unexpended might furnish forth the Master's table. "He's nae belly god, that's ae blessing; and Bucklaw's gane, that could have eaten a horse behind the saddle. Cresses or water-purpie, and a bit ait-cake, can serve the Master for breakfast as weel as Caleb. Then for dinner—there's no muckle left on the spule-bane; it will brander though—it will brander[13] very weel."

His triumphant calculations were interrupted by the Master, who communicated to him, not without some hesitation, his purpose to ride with the Lord Keeper as far as Ravenswood Castle, and to remain there for a day or two.

"The mercy of Heaven forbid!" said the old serving-man, turning as pale as the table-cloth which he was folding up.

"And why, Caleb?" said his Master, "why should the mercy of Heaven forbid my returning the Lord Keeper's visit?"

"Oh, sir!" replied Caleb—"O Mr. Edgar! I am your servant, and it ill becomes me to speak—but I am an

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auld servant—have served baith your father and goodsire, and mind to have seen Lord Randal, your great-grandfather—but that was when I was a bairn."

"And what of all this, Balderstone?" said the Master; "what can it possibly have to do with my paying some ordinary civility to a neighbour?"

"O Mr. Edgar,—that is, my lord!" answered the Butler, "your ain conscience tells you it isna for your father's son to be neighbouring wi' the like o' him—it isna for the credit of the family. An he were ance come to terms, and to gie ye back your ain, e'en though ye suld honour his house wi' your alliance, I suldna say na—for the young leddy is a winsome sweet creature—But keep your ain state wi' them—I ken the race o' them weel—they will think the mair o' ye."

"Why, now, you go farther than I do, Caleb," said the Master, drowning a certain degree of consciousness in a forced laugh; "you are for marrying me into a family that you will not allow me to visit—how's this?—and you look as pale as death besides."

"O, sir," repeated Caleb again, "you would but laugh if I tauld it; but Thomas the Rhymer, whose tongue couldna be fause, spoke the word of your house that will e'en prove ower true if you go to Ravenswood this day—O, that it should e'er have been fulfilled in my time!"

"And what is it, Caleb?" said Ravenswood, wishing to soothe the fears of his old servant.

Caleb replied, "he had never repeated the lines to living mortal—they were told to him by an auld priest that had been confessor to Lord Allan's father when the family were catholic. But mony a time," he said, "I hae soughed thae dark words ower to mysell, and well-a-day! little did I think of their coming round this day."

"Truce with your nonsense, and let me hear the doggrel which has put it into your head," said the Master impatiently.

With a quivering voice, and a cheek pale with apprehension, Caleb faltered out the following lines:—

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" When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
And wooe a dead maiden to be his bride,
He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
And his name shall be lost for evermoe !"

" I know the Kelpie's flow well enough," said the Master ; " I suppose, at least, you mean the quick-sand betwixt this tower and Wolf's-hope ; but why any man in his senses should stable a steed there"——

"O, never speer ony thing about that, sir—God forbid we should ken what the prophecy means—but just bide you at hame, and let the strangers ride to Ravenswood by themselves. We have done eneugh for them ; and to do mair, would be mair against the credit of the family than in its favour."

" Well, Caleb," said the Master, " I give you the best possible credit for your good advice on this occasion ; but as I do not go to Ravenswood to seek a bride, dead or alive, I hope I shall choose a better stable for my horse than the Kelpie's quick-sand, and especially as I have always had a particular dread of it since the patrol of dragoons were lost there ten years since. My father and I saw them from the tower struggling against the advancing tide, and they were lost long before any help could reach them."

" And they deserved it weel, the southern loons!" said Caleb ; " what had they ado capering on our sands, and hindering a wheen honest folk frae bringing on shore a drap brandy ? I hae seen them that busy, that I wad hae fired the auld culverin, or the demisaker that's on the south bartizan at them, only I was feared they might burst in the ganging aff."

Caleb's brain was now fully engaged with abuse of the English soldiery and excisemen, so that his master found no great difficulty in escaping from him and rejoining his guests. All was now ready for their departure ; and one of the Lord Keeper's grooms having saddled the Master's steed, they mounted in the court-yard.

Caleb had, with much toil, opened the double doors of the outward gate, and thereat stationed himself, endeav-

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ouring, by the reverential, and, at the same time, consequential air which he assumed, to supply, by his own gaunt, wasted, and thin person, the absence of a whole baronial establishment of porters, warders, and liveried menials.

The Keeper returned his deep reverence with a cordial farewell, stooping at the same time from his horse, and sliding into the Butler's hand the remuneration, which in those days was always given by a departing guest to the domestics of the family where he had been entertained. Lucy smiled on the old man with her usual sweetness, bade him adieu, and deposited her guerdon with a grace of action, and a gentleness of accent, which could not have failed to have won the faithful retainer's heart, but for Thomas the Rhymer, and the successful law-suit against his master. As it was, he might have adopted the language of the Duke, in *As you like it*—

> "Thou wouldst have better pleased me with this deed,
> If thou hadst told me of another father."

Ravenswood was at the lady's bridle-rein, encouraging her timidity, and guiding her horse carefully down the rocky path which led to the moor, when one of the servants announced from the rear that Caleb was calling loudly after them, desiring to speak with his master. Ravenswood felt it would look singular to neglect this summons, although inwardly cursing Caleb for his impertinent officiousness; therefore he was compelled to relinquish to Mr. Lockhard the agreeable duty in which he was engaged, and to ride back to the gate of the court-yard. Here he was beginning, somewhat peevishly, to ask Caleb the cause of his clamour, when the good old man exclaimed, "Whisht, sir! whisht, and let me speak just ae word that I couldna say afore folk—there"—(putting into his lord's hand the money he had just received)—"there's three gowd pieces—and ye'll want siller up-by yonder—but stay, whisht now!"—for the Master was beginning to exclaim against this transference—"never say a word, but just see to get them changed in the first town ye ride

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through, for they are bran new frae the mint, and ken-speckle a wee bit."

"You forget, Caleb," said his master, striving to force back the money on his servant, and extricate the bridle from his hold—"You forget that I have some gold pieces left of my own. Keep these to yourself, my old friend; and, once more, good day to you. I assure you I have plenty. You know you have managed that our living should cost us little or nothing."

"Aweel," said Caleb, "these will serve you another time; but see ye hae eneugh, for, doubtless, for the credit of the family, there maun be some civility to the servants, and ye maun hae something to mak a show with when they say, Master, will you bet a broad piece? Then ye maun tak out your purse, and say, I carena if I do; and tak care no to agree on the articles of the wager, and just put up your purse again, and"——

"This is intolerable, Caleb—I really must be gone."

"And you will go then?" said Caleb, loosening his hold upon the Master's cloak, and changing his didactics into a pathetic and mournful tone—"And you *will* go, for a' I have told you about the prophecy, and the dead bride, and the Kelpie's quicksand?—Aweel! a wilful man maun hae his way—he that will to Cupar maun to Cupar. But pity of your life, sir, if ye be fowling or shooting in the park—beware of drinking at the Mermaiden's well—He's gane! he's down the path, arrow-flight after her!—The head is as clean ta'en aff the Ravenswood family this day, as I wad chap the head aff a sybo!"

The old Butler looked long after his master, often clearing away the dew as it rose to his eyes, that he might, as long as possible, distinguish his stately form from those of the other horsemen. "Close to her bridle-rein—ay, close to her bridle-rein!—Wisely saith the holy man, 'By this also you may know that woman hath dominion over all men;'—and without this lass would not our ruin have been a'thegither fulfilled."

With a heart fraught with such sad auguries did Caleb return to his necessary duties at Wolf's Crag, as soon as

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he could no longer distinguish the object of his anxiety among the group of riders, which diminished in the distance.

In the mean time the party pursued their route joyfully. Having once taken his resolution, the Master of Ravenswood was not of a character to hesitate or pause upon it. He abandoned himself to the pleasure he felt in Miss Ashton's company, and displayed an assiduous gallantry, which approached as nearly to gaiety as the temper of his mind and the state of his family permitted. The Lord Keeper was much struck with his depth of observation, and the unusual improvement which he had derived from his studies. Of these accomplishments Sir William Ashton's profession and habits of society rendered him an excellent judge; and he well knew how to appreciate a quality to which he himself was a total stranger,—the brief and decided dauntlessness of the Master of Ravenswood's disposition, who seemed equally a stranger to doubt and to fear. In his heart the Lord Keeper rejoiced at having conciliated an adversary so formidable, while, with a mixture of pleasure and anxiety, he anticipated the great things his young companion might achieve, were the breath of court-favour to fill his sails.

"What could she desire," he thought, his mind always conjuring up opposition in the person of Lady Ashton to his now prevailing wish—"What could a woman desire in a match, more than the sopiting of a very dangerous claim, and the alliance of a son-in-law, noble, brave, well-gifted, and highly connected—sure to float whenever the tide sets his way—strong, exactly where we are weak, in pedigree and in the temper of a swordsman?—Sure no reasonable woman would hesitate—But, alas!"—Here his argument was stopped by the consciousness that Lady Ashton was not always reasonable, in his sense of the word. "To prefer some clownish Merse laird to the gallant young nobleman, and to the secure possession of Ravenswood upon terms of easy compromise—it would be the act of a mad-woman!"

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Thus pondered the veteran politician, until they reached Bittlebrains House, where it had been previously settled they were to dine and repose themselves, and prosecute their journey in the afternoon.

They were received with an excess of hospitality; and the most marked attention was offered to the Master of Ravenswood, in particular, by their noble entertainers. The truth was, that Lord Bittlebrains had obtained his peerage by a good deal of plausibility, an art of building up a character for wisdom upon a very trite style of common-place eloquence, a steady observation of the changes of the times, and the power of rendering certain political services to those who could best reward them. His lady and he not feeling quite easy under their new honours, to which use had not adapted their feelings, were very desirous to procure the fraternal countenance of those who were born denizens of the regions into which they had been exalted from a lower sphere. The extreme attention which they paid to the Master of Ravenswood, had its usual effect in exalting his importance in the eyes of the Lord Keeper, who, although he had a reasonable degree of contempt for Lord Bittlebrains' general parts, entertained a high opinion of the acuteness of his judgment in all matters of self-interest.

"I wish Lady Ashton had seen this," was his internal reflection; "no man knows so well as Bittlebrains on which side his bread is buttered; and he fawns on the Master like a beggar's messan on a cook. And my lady, too, bringing forward her beetle-browed misses to skirl and play upon the virginals, as if she said, pick and choose. They are no more comparable to Lucy than an owl is to a cygnet, and so they may carry their black brows to a farther market."

The entertainment being ended, our travellers, who had still to measure the longest part of their journey, resumed their horses; and after the Lord Keeper, the Master and the domestics, had drunk *doch-an-dorroch*, or the stirrup-cup, in the liquors adapted to their various ranks, the cavalcade resumed its progress.

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It was dark by the time they entered the avenue of Ravenswood Castle, a long straight line leading directly to the front of the house, flanked with huge elm-trees, which sighed to the night-wind, as if they compassionated the heir of their ancient proprietors, who now returned to their shades in the society, and almost in the retinue of their new master. Some feelings of the same kind oppressed the mind of the Master himself. He gradually became silent, and dropped a little behind the lady, at whose bridle-rein he had hitherto waited with such devotion. He well recollected the period, when, at the same hour in the evening, he had accompanied his father, as that nobleman left, never again to return to it, the mansion from which he derived his name and title. The extensive front of the old Castle, on which he remembered having often looked back, was then "as black as mourning weed." The same front now glanced with many lights, some throwing far forward into the night a fixed and stationary blaze, and others hurrying from one window to another, intimating the bustle and busy preparation preceding their arrival, which had been intimated by an avant-courier. The contrast pressed so strongly upon the Master's heart, as to awaken some of the sterner feelings with which he had been accustomed to regard the new lord of his paternal domain, and to impress his countenance with an air of severe gravity, when, alighted from his horse, he stood in the hall no longer his own, surrounded by the numerous menials of its present owner.

The Lord Keeper, when about to welcome him with the cordiality which their late intercourse seemed to render proper, became aware of the change, refrained from his purpose, and only intimated the ceremony of reception by a deep reverence to his guest, seeming thus delicately to share the feelings which predominated on his brow.

Two upper domestics, bearing each a huge pair of silver candlesticks, now marshalled the company into a large saloon or withdrawing room, where new alterations

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impressed upon Ravenswood the superior wealth of the present inhabitants of the castle. The mouldering tapestry, which, in his father's time, had half covered the walls of this stately apartment, and half streamed from them in tatters, had given place to a complete finishing of wainscot, the cornice of which, as well as the frames of the various compartments, were ornamented with festoons of flowers and with birds, which, though carved in oak, seemed, such was the art of the chisel, actually to swell their throats, and flutter their wings. Several old family portraits of armed heroes of the house of Ravenswood, together with a suit or two of old armour, and some military weapons, had given place to those of King William and Queen Mary, of Sir Thomas Hope and Lord Stair, two distinguished Scottish lawyers. The pictures of the Lord Keeper's father and mother were also to be seen; the latter, sour, shrewish, and solemn, in her black hood and close pinners, with a book of devotion in her hand; the former, exhibiting beneath a black silk Geneva cowl, or skull-cap, which sat as close to the head as if it had been shaven, a pinched, peevish, puritanical set of features, terminating in a hungry, reddish, peaked beard, forming on the whole a countenance, in the expression of which the hypocrite seemed to contend with the miser and the knave. And it is to make room for such scarecrows as these, thought Ravenswood, that my ancestors have been torn down from the walls which they erected! He looked at them again, and, as he looked, the recollection of Lucy Ashton (for she had not entered the apartment with them) seemed less lively in his imagination. There were also two or three Dutch drolleries, as the pictures of Ostade and Teniers were then termed, with one good painting of the Italian school. There was, besides, a noble full-length of the Lord Keeper in his robes of office, placed beside his lady in silk and ermine, a haughty beauty, bearing in her looks all the pride of the house of Douglas, from which she was descended. The painter, notwithstanding his skill, overcome by the

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reality, or, perhaps, from a suppressed sense of humour, had not been able to give the husband on the canvass that air of awful rule and right supremacy, which indicates the full possession of domestic authority. It was obvious, at the first glance, that, despite mace and gold frogs, the Lord Keeper was somewhat henpecked. The floor of this fine saloon was laid with rich carpets, huge fires blazed in the double chimneys, and ten silver sconces, reflecting with their bright plates the lights which they supported, made the whole seem as brilliant as day.

"Would you choose any refreshment, Master?" said Sir William Ashton, not unwilling to break the awkward silence.

He received no answer, the Master being so busily engaged in marking the various changes which had taken place in the apartment, that he hardly heard the Lord Keeper address him. A repetition of the offer of refreshment, with the addition, that the family meal would be presently ready, compelled his attention, and reminded him, that he acted a weak, perhaps even a ridiculous part, in suffering himself to be overcome by the circumstances in which he found himself. He compelled himself, therefore, to enter into conversation with Sir William Ashton, with as much appearance of indifference as he could well command.

"You will not be surprised Sir William, that I am interested in the changes you have made for the better in this apartment. In my father's time, after our misfortunes compelled him to live in retirement, it was little used, except by me as a play-room, when the weather would not permit me to go abroad. In that recess was my little work-shop, where I treasured the few carpenter's tools which old Caleb procured for me, and taught me how to use—there, in yonder corner, under that handsome silver sconce, I kept my fishing-rods, and hunting poles, bows, and arrows."

"I have a young birkie," said the Lord Keeper, willing to change the tone of the conversation, "of much the same turn—He is never happy, save when he is in

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the field—I wonder he is not here.—Here, Lockhard—send William Shaw for Mr. Henry—I suppose he is, as usual, tied to Lucy's apron string—that foolish girl, Master, draws the whole family after her at her pleasure."

Even this allusion to his daughter, though artfully thrown out, did not recall Ravenswood from his own topic.

"We were obliged to leave," he said, "some armour and portraits in this apartment—may I ask where they have been removed to?"

"Why," answered the Keeper, with some hesitation, "the room was fitted up in our absence—and *cedant arma togæ*, is the maxim of lawyers, you know—I am afraid it has been here somewhat too literally complied with. I hope—I believe they are safe—I am sure I gave orders—may I hope that when they are recovered, and put in proper order, you will do me the honour to accept them at my hand, as an atonement for their accidental derangement?"

The Master of Ravenswood bowed stiffly, and, with folded arms, again resumed his survey of the room.

Henry, a spoilt boy of fifteen, burst into the room, and ran up to his father. "Think of Lucy, papa; she has come home so cross and so fractious, that she will not go down to the stable to see my new pony, that Bob Wilson brought from the Mull of Galloway."

"I think you were very unreasonable to ask her," said the Keeper.

"Then you are as cross as she is," answered the boy; "but when mamma comes home she'll claw up both your mittens."

"Hush your impertinence, you little forward imp!" said his father; "where is your tutor?"

"Gone to a wedding at Dunbar—I hope he'll get a haggis to his dinner;" and he began to sing the old Scottish song,

"There was a haggis in Dunbar,
Fal de ral, &c.
Mony better and few waur,
Fal de ral," &c.

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"I am much obliged to Mr. Cordery for his attentions," said the Lord Keeper; "and pray who has had the charge of you while I was away, Mr. Henry?"

"Norman and Bob Wilson—forby my own self."

"A groom and a game-keeper, and your own silly self—proper guardians for a young advocate!—Why, you will never know any statutes but those against shooting red-deer, killing salmon, and"——

"And speaking of red-game," said the young scapegrace, interrupting his father without scruple or hesitation, "Norman has shot a buck, and I showed the branches to Lucy, and she says they have but eight tynes, and she says that you killed a deer with Lord Bittlebrains' hounds, when you were west away, and do you know she says it had ten tynes—is it true?"

"It may have had twenty, Henry, for what I know; but if you go to that gentleman he can tell you all about it—Go speak to him, Henry—it is the Master of Ravenswood."

While they conversed thus, the father and son were standing by the fire; and the Master having walked towards the upper end of the apartment, stood with his back towards them, apparently engaged in examining one of the paintings. The boy ran up to him, and pulled him by the skirt of the coat with the freedom of a spoilt child, saying, "I say, sir—if you please to tell me"—— but when the Master turned round, and Henry saw his face, he became suddenly and totally disconcerted—walked two or three steps backward, and still gazed on Ravenswood with an air of fear and wonder, which had totally banished from his features their usual expression of pert vivacity.

"Come to me, young gentleman," said the Master, "and I will tell you all I know about the hunt."

"Go to the gentleman, Henry," said his father; "you are not used to be so shy."

But neither invitation nor exhortation had any effect on the boy. On the contrary, he turned round as soon as he had completed his survey of the Master, and walk-

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ing as cautiously as if he had been treading upon eggs, he glided back to his father, and pressed as close to him as possible. Ravenswood, to avoid hearing the dispute betwixt the father and the over-indulged boy, thought it most polite to turn his face once more towards the pictures, and pay no attention to what they said.

"Why do you not speak to the Master, you little fool?" said the Lord Keeper.

"I am afraid," said Henry, in a very low tone of voice.

"Afraid, you goose!" said his father, giving him a slight shake by the collar,—"What makes you afraid?"

"What makes him so like the picture of Sir Malise Ravenswood, then?" said the boy, whispering.

"What picture, you natural?" said his father. "I used to think you only a scape-grace, but I believe you will turn out a born idiot."

"I tell you it is the picture of old Malise of Ravenswood, and he is as like it as if he had loupen out of the canvass; and it is up in the old Baron's hall that the maids launder the clothes in, and it has armour and not a coat like the gentleman, and he has not a beard and whiskers like the picture, and it has another kind of thing about the throat, and no band-strings as he has, and"——

"And why should not the gentleman be like his ancestor, you silly boy?" said the Lord Keeper.

"Ay; but if he is come to chase us all out of the castle," said the boy, "and has twenty men at his back in disguise—and is come to say with a hollow voice, *I bide my time*,—and is to kill you on the hearth as Malise did the other man, and whose blood is still to be seen!"

"Hush! nonsense!" said the Lord Keeper, not himself much pleased to hear these disagreeable coincidences forced on his notice. "Master, here comes Lockhard, to say supper is served."

And, at the same instant, Lucy entered at another door, having changed her dress since her return. The exquisite feminine beauty of her countenance, now shaded only by a profusion of sunny tresses; the sylph-like form dis-

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encumbered of her heavy riding-skirt, and mantled in azure silk; the grace of her manner and of her smile, cleared, with a celerity which surprised the Master himself, all the gloomy and unfavourable thoughts which had for some time overclouded his fancy. In those features, so simply sweet, he could trace no alliance with the pinched visage of the peak-bearded, black-capped puritan, or his starched withered spouse, with the craft expressed in the Lord Keeper's countenance, or the haughtiness which predominated in that of his lady; and, while he gazed on Lucy Ashton, she seemed to be an angel descended on earth, unallied to the coarser mortals among whom she deigned to dwell for a season. Such is the power of beauty over a youthful and enthusiastic fancy.

CHAPTER XIX.

——————I do too ill in this,
And must not think but that a parent's plaint
Will move the heavens to pour forth misery
Upon the head of disobediency.
Yet reason tells us, parents are o'erseen,
When with too strict a rein they do hold in
Their child's affection, and control that love,
Which the high powers divine inspire them with.

The Hog hath lost his Pearl.

THE feast of Ravenswood Castle was as remarkable for its profusion, as that of Wolf's Crag had been for its ill-veiled penury. The Lord Keeper might feel internal pride at the contrast, but he had too much *tact* to suffer it to appear. On the contrary, he seemed to remember with pleasure what he called Mr. Balderstone's bachelor's meal, and to be rather disgusted than pleased with the display upon his own groaning board.

"We do these things," he said "because others do

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hem—but I was bred a plain man at my father's frugal table, and I should like well, would my wife and family permit me to return to my sowens and my poor-man-of-mutton."[14]

This was a little over-stretched. The Master only answered, "That different ranks—I mean," said he, correcting himself, "different degrees of wealth require a different style of house-keeping."

This dry remark put a stop to further conversation on the subject, nor is it necessary to record that which was substituted in its place. The evening was spent with freedom, and even cordiality; and Henry had so far overcome his first apprehensions, that he had settled a party for coursing a stag with the representative and living resemblance of grim Sir Malise of Ravenswood, called the Revenger. The next morning was the appointed time. It rose upon active sportsmen and successful sport. The banquet came in course; and a pressing invitation to tarry yet another day was given and accepted. This Ravenswood had resolved should be the last of his stay; but he recollected he had not yet visited the ancient and devoted servant of his house, old Alice, and it was but kind to dedicate one morning to the gratification of so ancient an adherent.

To visit Alice, therefore, a day was devoted, and Lucy was the Master's guide upon the way. Henry, it is true, accompanied them, and took from their walk the air of a *tête-à-tête*, while, in reality, it was little else, considering the variety of circumstances which occurred to prevent the boy from giving the least attention to what passed between his companions. Now a rook settled on a branch within shot—anon a hare crossed their path, and Henry and his greyhound went astray in pursuit of it—then he had to hold a long conversation with the forester, which detained him awhile behind his companions—and again he went to examine the earth of a badger, which carried him on a good way before them.

The conversation betwixt the Master and his sister, meanwhile, took an interesting, and almost a confidential

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turn. She could not help mentioning her sense of the pain he must feel in visiting scenes so well known to him, bearing now an aspect so different; and so gently was her sympathy expressed, that Ravenswood felt it for a moment as a full requital of all his misfortunes. Some such sentiment escaped him, which Lucy heard with more of confusion than displeasure; and she may be forgiven the imprudence of listening to such language, considering that the situation in which she was placed by her father seemed to authorize Ravenswood to use it. Yet she made an effort to turn the conversation, and she succeeded; for the Master also had advanced farther than he intended, and his conscience had instantly checked him when he found himself on the verge of speaking of love to the daughter of Sir William Ashton.

They now approached the hut of old Alice, which had of late been rendered more comfortable, and presented an appearance less picturesque, perhaps, but far neater than before. The old woman was on her accustomed seat beneath the weeping birch, basking, with the listless enjoyment of age and infirmity, in the beams of the autumn sun. At the arrival of her visiters she turned her head towards them. "I hear your step, Miss Ashton," she said, "but the gentleman who attends you is not my lord, your father."

"And why should you think so, Alice?" said Lucy; "or how is it possible for you to judge so accurately by the sound of a step, on this firm earth, and in the open air?"

"My hearing, my child, has been sharpened by my blindness, and I can now draw conclusions from the slightest sounds, which formerly reached my ears as unheeded as they now approach yours. Necessity is a stern but an excellent schoolmistress, and she that has lost her sight must collect her information from other sources."

"Well, you hear a man's step, I grant it," said Lucy; "but why, Alice, may it not be my father's?"

"The pace of age, my love, is timid and cautious—the foot takes leave of the earth slowly, and is planted

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down upon it with hesitation; it is the hasty and determined step of youth that I now hear, and—could I give credit to so strange a thought—I should say it was the step of a Ravenswood."

"This is indeed," said Ravenswood, "an acuteness of organ which I could not have credited had I not witnessed it.—I am indeed the Master of Ravenswood, Alice—the son of your old master."

"You?" said the old woman, with almost a scream of surprise—"you the Master of Ravenswood—here—in this place, and thus accompanied?—I cannot believe it—Let me pass my old hand over your face, that my touch may bear witness to my ears."

The Master sat down beside her on the earthen bank, and permitted her to touch his features with her trembling hand.

"It is indeed!" she said, "it is the features as well as the voice of Ravenswood—the high lines of pride, as well as the bold and haughty tone—But what do you here, Master of Ravenswood?—what do you in your enemy's domain, and in company with his child?"

As old Alice spoke, her face kindled, as probably that of an ancient feudal vassal might have done, in whose presence his youthful liege-lord had showed some symptom of degenerating from the spirit of his ancestors.

"The Master of Ravenswood," said Lucy, who liked not the tone of this expostulation, and was desirous to abridge it, "is upon a visit to my father."

"Indeed!" said the old blind woman, in an accent of surprise.

"I knew," continued Lucy, "I should do him a pleasure by conducting him to your cottage."

"Where, to say the truth, Alice," said Ravenswood. "I expected a more cordial reception."

"It is most wonderful!" said the old woman, muttering to herself; "but the ways of Heaven are not like our ways, and its judgments are brought about by means far beyond our fathoming.—Hearken, young man," she said; "your fathers were implacable, but they were hon-

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ourable foes ; they sought not to ruin their enemies under the mask of hospitality. What have you to do with Lucy Ashton ?—why should your steps move in the same foot-path with her's ?—why should your voice sound in the same chord and time with those of Sir William Ashton's daughter ?—Young man, he who aims at revenge by dishonourable means"——

" Be silent, woman !" said Ravenswood sternly ; " is it the devil that prompts your voice ?—Know that this young lady has not on earth a friend who would venture farther to save her from injury or from insult."

" And is it even so ?" said the old woman, in an altered but melancholy tone—" then God help you both !"

" Amen ! Alice," said Lucy, who had not comprehended the import of what the blind woman had hinted, " and send you your senses, Alice, and your good-humour. If you hold this mysterious language, instead of welcoming your friends, they will think of you as other people do."

" And how do other people think ?" said Ravenswood, for he also began to believe the old woman spoke with incoherence.

" They think," said Henry Ashton, who came up at that moment, and whispered into Ravenswood's ear, " that she is a witch, that should have been burned with them that suffered at Haddington."

" What is that you say ?" said Alice, turning towards the boy, her sightless visage inflamed with passion ; " that I am a witch, and ought to have suffered with the helpless old wretches who were murdered at Haddington ?"

" Hear to that now," again whispered Henry, " and me whispering lower than a wren cheeps !"

" If the usurer, and the oppressor, and the grinder of the poor man's face, and the remover of ancient landmarks, and the subverter of ancient houses, were at the same stake with me, I could say, light the fire, in God's name !"

" This is dreadful," said Lucy ; " I have never seen the poor deserted woman in this state of mind ; but age

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and poverty can ill bear reproach.—Come, Henry, we will leave her for the present—she wishes to speak with the Master alone. We will walk homeward, and rest us," she added, looking at Ravenswood, " by the Mermaiden's Well."

" And Alice," said the boy, " if you know of any hare that comes through among the deer, and makes them drop their calves out of season, you may tell her, with my compliments to command, that if Norman has not got a silver bullet ready for her, I'll lend him one of my doublet-buttons on purpose."

Alice made no answer till she was aware that the sister and brother were out of hearing. She then said to Ravenswood, " And you, too, are angry with me for my love ?—it is just that strangers should be offended, but you, too, are angry !"

" I am not angry, Alice," said the Master, " only surprised that you, whose good sense I have heard so often praised, should give way to offensive and unfounded suspicions."

" Offensive ?" said Alice—" Ay, truth is ever offensive—but, surely, not unfounded."

" I tell you, dame, most groundless," replied Ravenswood.

" Then the world has changed its wont, and the Ravenswoods their hereditary temper, and the eyes of old Alice's understanding are yet more blind than those of her countenance. When did a Ravenswood seek the house of his enemy, but with the purpose of revenge ? —and hither are you come, Edgar Ravenswood, either in fatal anger, or in still more fatal love."

" In neither," said Ravenswood, " I give you mine honour—I mean, I assure you."

Alice could not see his blushing cheek, but she noticed his hesitation, and that he retracted the pledge which he seemed at first disposed to attach to his denial.

" It is so, then," she said, " and therefore she is to tarry by the Mermaiden's Well ! Often has it been called a place fatal to the race of Ravenswood—often has it

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proved so—but never was it likely to verify old sayings so much as on this day."

"You drive me to madness, Alice," said Ravenswood; "you are more silly and more superstitious than old Balderstone. Are you such a wretched Christian as to suppose I would in the present day levy war against the Ashton family, as was the sanguinary custom in elder times? or do you suppose me so foolish, that I cannot walk by a young lady's side without plunging headlong in love with her?"

"My thoughts," replied Alice, "are my own; and if my mortal sight is closed to objects present with me, it may be I can look with more steadiness into future events. Are you prepared to sit lowest at the board which was once your father's own, unwillingly, as a connection and ally of his proud successor?—Are you ready to live on his bounty—to follow him in the by-paths of intrigue and chicane, which none can better point out to you—to gnaw the bones of his prey when he has devoured the substance?—Can you say as Sir William Ashton says—think as he thinks—vote as he votes, and call your father's murderer your worshipful father-in-law and revered patron?—Master of Ravenswood, I am the eldest servant of your house, and I would rather see you shrouded and coffined!"

The tumult in Ravenswood's mind was uncommonly great; she struck upon and awakened a chord which he had for some time successfully silenced. He strode backwards and forwards through the little garden with a hasty pace; and at length checking himself, and stopping right opposite to Alice, he exclaimed, "Woman! on the verge of the grave, dare you urge the son of your master to blood and to revenge?"

"God forbid!" said Alice solemnly; "and therefore I would have you depart these fatal bounds, where your love, as well as your hatred, threatens sure mischief, or at least disgrace, both to yourself and others. I would shield, were it in the power of this withered hand, the Ashtons from you, and you from them, and both from their own passions You can have nothing, ought to have

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nothing, in common with them—Begone from among them; and if God has destined vengeance on the oppressor's house, do not you be the instrument."

"I will think on what you have said, Alice," said Ravenswood more composedly. "I believe you mean truly and faithfully by me, but you urge the freedom of an ancient domestic somewhat too far. But farewell; and if Heaven afford me better means, I will not fail to contribute to your comfort."

He attempted to put a piece of gold into her hand, which she refused to receive; and, in the slight struggle attending his wish to force it upon her, it dropped to the earth.

"Let it remain an instant on the ground," said Alice, as the Master stooped to raise it; "and believe me, that piece of gold is an emblem of her whom you love; she is as precious, I grant, but you must stoop even to abasement before you can win her. For me, I have as little to do with gold as with earthly passions; and the best news that the world has in store for me is, that Edgar Ravenswood is an hundred miles distant from the seat of his ancestors, with the determination never again to behold it."

"Alice," said the Master, who began to think this earnestness had some more secret cause than arose from anything that the blind woman could have gathered from this casual visit, "I have heard you praised by my mother for your sense, acuteness, and fidelity; you are no fool to start at shadows, or to dread old superstitious saws, like Caleb Balderstone; tell me distinctly where my danger lies, if you are aware of any which is tending towards me. If I know myself, I am free from all such views respecting Miss Ashton as you impute to me. I have necessary business to settle with Sir William—that arranged, I shall depart; and with as little wish, as you may easily believe, to return to a place full of melancholy subjects of reflection, as you have to see me here."

Alice bent her sightless eyes on the ground, and was for sometime plunged in deep meditation. "I will speak

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the truth," she said at length, raising up her head—"I will tell you the source of my apprehensions, whether my candour be for good or for evil—Lucy Ashton loves you, Lord of Ravenswood!"

"It is impossible," said the Master.

"A thousand circumstances have proved it to me," replied the blind woman. "Her thoughts have turned on no one else since you saved her from death, and that my experienced judgment has won from her own conversation. Having told you this—if you are indeed a gentleman and your father's son—you will make it a motive for flying from her presence. Her passion will die like a lamp, for want of that the flame should feed upon; but, if you remain here, her destruction, or yours, or that of both, will be the inevitable consequence of her misplaced attachment. I tell you this secret unwillingly, but it could not have been hid long from your own observation; and it is better you learn it from mine. Depart, Master of Ravenswood—you have my secret. If you remain an hour under Sir William Ashton's roof without the resolution to marry his daughter, you are a villain—if with the purpose of allying yourself with him, you are an infatuated and predestined fool."

So saying, the old blind woman arose, assumed her staff, and, tottering to her hut, entered it and closed the door, leaving Ravenswood to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XX.

"Lovelier in her own retired abode
——— than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook—or Lady of the Mere
Lone sitting by the shores of old romance."
Wordsworth.

THE meditations of Ravenswood were of a very mixed complexion. He saw himself at once in the very di-

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lemma which he had for some time felt apprehensive he might be placed in. The pleasure he felt in Lucy's company had indeed approached to fascination, yet it had never altogether surmounted his internal reluctance to wed with the daughter of his father's foe; and even in forgiving Sir William Ashton the injuries which his family had received, and giving him credit for the kind intentions he professed to entertain, he could not bring himself to contemplate as possible an alliance betwixt their houses. Still he felt that Alice spoke truth, and that his honour now required he should take an instant leave of Ravenswood Castle, or become a suitor of Lucy Ashton. The possibility of being rejected, too, should he make advances to her wealthy and powerful father—to sue for the hand of an Ashton and be refused—this were a consummation too disgraceful. "I wish her well," he said to himself, "and for her sake I forgive the injuries her father has done to my house; but I will never—no, never see her more!"

With one bitter pang he adopted this resolution, just as he came to where two paths parted; the one to the Mermaiden's Fountain, where he knew Lucy waited him, the other leading to the castle by another and more circuitous road. He paused an instant when about to take the latter path, thinking what apology he should make for conduct which must needs seem extraordinary, and had just muttered to himself, "Sudden news from Edinburgh—any pretext will serve—only let me dally no longer here," when young Henry came flying up to him, half out of breath—"Master, Master, you must give Lucy your arm back to the castle, for I cannot give her mine; for Norman is waiting for me, and I am to go with him to make his ring-walk, and I would not stay away for a gold Jacobus, and Lucy is afraid to walk home alone, though all the wild nowt have been shot, and so you must come away directly."

Betwixt two scales equally loaded, a feather's weight will turn the scale. "It is impossible for me to leave the young lady in the wood alone," said Ravenswood; "to

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see her once more can be of little consequence, after the frequent meetings we have had—I ought, too, in courtesy, to apprize her of my intention to quit the castle."

And having thus satisfied himself that he was taking not only a wise, but an absolutely necessary step, he took the path to the fatal fountain. Henry no sooner saw him on the way to join his sister, than he was off like lightning in another direction, to enjoy the society of the forester in their congenial pursuits. Ravenswood, not allowing himself to give a second thought to the propriety of his own conduct, walked with a quick step towards the stream, where he found Lucy seated alone by the ruin.

She sat upon one of the disjointed stones of the ancient fountain, and seemed to watch the progress of its current, as it bubbled forth to daylight, in gay and sparkling profusion, from under the shadow of the ribbed and darksome vault, with which veneration, or perhaps remorse, had canopied its source. To a superstitious eye, Lucy Ashton, folded in her plaiden mantle, with her long hair escaping partly from the snood and falling upon her silver neck, might have suggested the idea of the murdered Nymph of the Fountain. But Ravenswood only saw a female exquisitely beautiful, and rendered yet more so in his eyes—how could it be otherwise—by the consciousness that she had placed her affections on him. As he gazed on her, he felt his fixed resolution melting like wax in the sun, and hastened, therefore, from his concealment in the neighbouring thicket. She saluted him, but did not arise from the stone on which she was seated.

"My mad-cap brother," she said, "has left me, but I expect him back in a few minutes—for fortunately, as anything pleases him for a minute, nothing has charms for him much longer."

Ravenswood did not feel the power of informing Lucy that her brother meditated a distant excursion, and would not return in haste. He sat himself down on the grass, at some little distance from Miss Ashton, and both were silent for a short space.

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"I like this spot," said Lucy at length, as if she had found the silence embarrassing; "the bubbling murmur of the clear fountain, the waving of the trees, the profusion of grass and wild-flowers, that rise among the ruins, make it like a scene in romance. I think, too, I have heard it is a spot connected with the legendary lore which I love so well."

"It has been thought," answered Ravenswood, "a fatal spot to my family, and I have some reason to term it so, for it was here I first saw Miss Ashton—and it is here I must take my leave of her for ever."

The blood, which the first part of this speech called into Lucy's cheeks, was speedily expelled by its conclusion.

"To take leave of us, Master!" she exclaimed; "what can have happened to hurry you away?—I know Alice hates—I mean dislikes my father—and I hardly understood her humour to-day, it was so mysterious. But I am certain my father is sincerely grateful for the high service you rendered us. Let me hope that having won your friendship hardly, we shall not lose it lightly."

"Lose it, Miss Ashton?" said the Master of Ravenswood,—"No—wherever my fortune calls me—whatever she inflicts upon me—it is your friend—your sincere friend who acts or suffers. But there is a fate on me, and I must go, or I shall add the ruin of others to my own."

"Yet do not go from us, Master," said Lucy; and she laid her hand, in all simplicity and kindness upon the skirt of his cloak, as if to detain him—"You shall not part from us. My father is powerful, he has friends that are more so than himself—do not go till you see what his gratitude will do for you. Believe me, he is already labouring in your behalf with the Council."

"It may be so," said the Master, proudly; "yet it is not to your father, Miss Ashton, but to my own exertions, that I ought to owe success in the career on which I am about to enter. My preparations are already made—a sword and a cloak, and a bold heart and a determined hand."

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Lucy covered her face with her hands, and the tears, in spite of her, forced their way between her fingers. "Forgive me," said Ravenswood, taking her right hand, which, after slight resistance, she yielded to him, still continuing to shade her face with the left—"I am too rude —too rough—too intractable to deal with any being so soft and gentle as you are. Forget that so stern a vision has crossed your path of life—and let me pursue mine, sure that I can meet with no worse misfortune after the moment it divides me from your side."

Lucy wept on, but her tears were less bitter. Each attempt which the Master made to explain his purpose of departure, only proved a new evidence of his desire to stay; until, at length, instead of bidding her farewell, he gave his faith to her forever, and received her troth in return. The whole passed so suddenly, and arose so much out of the immediate impulse of the moment, that ere the Master of Ravenswood could reflect upon the consequences of the step which he had taken, their lips, as well as their hands, had pledged the sincerity of their affection.

"And now," he said, after a moment's consideration, "it is fit I should speak to Sir William Ashton—he must know of our engagement. Ravenswood must not seem to dwell under his roof, to solicit clandestinely the affections of his daughter."

"You would not speak to my father on the subject?" said Lucy, doubtingly; and then added more warmly, "O do not—do not! Let your lot in life be determined —your station and purpose ascertained, before you address my father; I am sure he loves you—I think he will consent—but then my mother!"——

She paused, ashamed to express the doubt she felt how far her father dared to form any positive resolution on this most important subject without the consent of his lady.

"Your mother, my Lucy?" replied Ravenswood; "she is of the house of Douglas, a house that has intermarried with mine, even when its glory and power were at the highest—what could your mother object to my alliance?"

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"I did not say object," said Lucy; "but she is jealous of her rights, and may claim a mother's title to be consulted in the first instance."

"Be it so," replied Ravenswood; "London is distant, but a letter will reach it and receive an answer within a fortnight—I will not press on the Lord Keeper for an instant reply to my proposal."

"But," hesitated Lucy, "were it not better to wait—to wait a few weeks?—were my mother to see you—to know you—I am sure she would approve; but you are unacquainted personally, and the ancient feud between the families"——

Ravenswood fixed upon her his keen dark eyes, as if he was desirous of penetrating into her very soul.

"Lucy," he said, "I have sacrificed to you projects of vengeance long nursed, and sworn to with ceremonies little better than heathen—I sacrificed them to your image, ere I knew the worth which it represented. In the evening which succeeded my poor father's funeral, I cut a lock from my hair, and, as it consumed in the fire, I swore that my rage and revenge should pursue his enemies, until they shrivelled before me like that scorched-up symbol of annihilation."

"It was a deadly sin," said Lucy, turning pale, "to make a vow so fatal."

"I acknowledge it," said Ravenswood, "and it had been a worse crime to keep it. It was for your sake that I abjured these purposes of vengeance, though I scarce knew that such was the argument by which I was conquered, until I saw you once more, and became conscious of the influence you possessed over me."

"And why do you now," said Lucy, "recall sentiments so terrible—sentiments so inconsistent with those you profess for me—with those your importunity has prevailed on me to acknowledge?"

"Because," said her lover, "I would impress on you the price at which I have bought your love—the right I have to expect your constancy. I say not that I have bartered for it the honour of my house, its last remaining pos

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session—but though I say it not, and think it not, I cannot conceal from myself that the world may do both."

"If such are your sentiments," said Lucy, "you have played a cruel game with me. But it is not too late to give it over—take back the faith and troth which you could not plight to me without suffering abatement of honour—let what is passed be as if it had not been—forget me—I will endeavour to forget myself."

"You do me injustice," said the Master of Ravenswood; "by all I hold true and honourable, you do me the extremity of injustice—if I mentioned the price at which I have bought your love, it is only to show how much I prize it, to bind our engagement by a still firmer tie, and to show, by what I have done to attain this station in your regard, how much I must suffer should you ever break your faith."

"And why, Ravenswood," answered Lucy, "should you think that possible?—Why should you urge me with even the mention of infidelity?—Is it because I ask you to delay applying to my father for a little space of time? Bind me by what vows you please; if vows are unnecessary to secure constancy, they may yet prevent suspicion."

Ravenswood pleaded, apologized, and even kneeled, to appease her displeasure; and Lucy, as placable as she was single-hearted, readily forgave the offence which his doubts had implied. The dispute thus agitated, however, ended by the lovers going through an emblematic ceremony of their troth-plight, of which the vulgar still preserve some traces. They broke betwixt them the thin broad-piece of gold which Alice had refused to receive from Ravenswood.

"And never shall this leave my bosom," said Lucy, as she hung the piece of gold round her neck, and concealed it with her handkerchief, "until you, Edgar Ravenswood, ask me to resign it to you—and, while I wear it, never shall that heart acknowledge another love than your's."

With like protestations, Ravenswood placed his portion of the coin opposite to his heart. And now, at length, it

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struck them, that time had hurried fast on during this interview, and their absence at the castle would be subject of remark, if not of alarm. As they arose to leave the fountain which had been witness of their mutual engagement, an arrow whistled through the air, and struck a raven perched on the sere branch of an old oak, near to where they had been seated. The bird fluttered a few yards, and dropped at the feet of Lucy, whose dress was stained with some spots of its blood.

Miss Ashton was much alarmed, and Ravenswood, surprised and angry, looked every where for the marksman, who had given them a proof of his skill as little expected as desired. He was not long of discovering himself, being no other than Henry Ashton, who came running up with a cross-bow in his hand.

"I knew I should startle you," he said; "and do you know you looked so busy that I hoped it would have fallen souse on your heads before you were aware of it —What was the Master saying to you, Lucy?"

"I was telling your sister what an idle lad you were, keeping us waiting here for you so long," said Ravenswood, to save Lucy's confusion.

"Waiting for me? Why, I told you to see Lucy home, and that I was to go to make the ring-walk with old Norman in the Hayberry thicket, and you may be sure that would take a good hour, and we have all the deer's marks and furnishes got, while you were sitting here with Lucy like a lazy loon."

"Well, well, Mr. Henry," said Ravenswood; "but let us see how you will answer to me for killing the raven. Do you know the ravens are all under the protection of the Lords of Ravenswood, and, to kill one in their presence, is such bad luck that it deserves the stab?"

"And that's what Norman said," replied the boy; "he came as far with me as within a flight-shot of you, and he said he never saw a raven sit still so near living folk, and he wished it might be for good luck; for the raven is one of the wildest birds that flies, unless it be a tame one—and so I crept on and on, till I was within three

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score yards of him, and then whiz went the bolt, and there he lies, faith ! Was it not well shot ?—and, I dare say, I have not shot in a cross-bow—not ten times, maybe."

" Admirably shot indeed," said Ravenswood ; " and you will be a fine marksman if you practise hard."

" That's what Norman says," answered the boy ; " but I am sure it is not my fault if I do not practise enough ; for, of free will, I would do little else, only my father and tutor are angry sometimes, and only Miss Lucy there gives herself airs about my being busy, for all she can sit idle by a well-side the whole day when she has a handsome young gentleman to prate with—I have known her to do so twenty times, if you will believe me."

The boy looked at his sister as he spoke, and, in the midst of his mischievous chatter, had the sense to see that he was really inflicting pain upon her, though without being able to comprehend the cause or the amount.

" Come now, Lucy," he said, " don't greet ; and if I have said anything beside the mark, I'll deny it again—and what does the Master of Ravenswood care if you had a hundred sweethearts?—so ne'er put finger in your eye about it."

The Master of Ravenswood was, for the moment, scarce satisfied with what he heard ; yet his good sense naturally regarded it as the chatter of a spoiled boy, who strove to mortify his sister in the point which seemed most accessible for the time. But, although of a temper equally slow in receiving impressions, and obstinate in retaining them, the prattle of Henry served to nourish in his mind some vague suspicion, that his present engagement might only end in his being exposed like a conquered enemy in a Roman triumph, a captive attendant on the car of a victor, who meditated only the satiating his pride at the expense of the vanquished. There was, we repeat it, no real ground whatever for such an apprehension, nor could he be said seriously to entertain such for a moment. Indeed, it was impossible to look at the clear blue eye of Lucy Ashton, and entertain the slightest permanent doubt concerning the sincerity of her disposition. Still, how-

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ever, conscious pride and conscious poverty combined to render a mind suspicious, which, in more fortunate circumstances, would have been a stranger to that as well as to every other meanness."

They reached the castle, where Sir William Ashton, who had been alarmed by the length of their stay, met them in the hall."

"Had Lucy," he said, "been in any other company than that of one who had shown he had so complete power of protecting her, he confessed he should have been very uneasy, and would have despatched persons in quest of them. But, in the company of the Master of Ravenswood, he knew his daughter had nothing to dread."

Lucy commenced some apology for their long delay, but, conscience struck, became confused as she proceeded; and when Ravenswood, coming to her assistance, endeavoured to render the explanation complete and satisfactory, he only involved himself in the same disorder, like one who, endeavouring to extricate his companion from a slough, entangles himself in the same tenacious swamp. It cannot be supposed that the confusion of the two youthful lovers escaped the observation of the subtle lawyer, accustomed, by habit and profession, to trace human nature through all her windings. But it was not his present policy to take any notice of what he observed. He desired to hold the Master of Ravenswood bound, but wished that he himself should remain free; and it did not occur to him that his plan might be defeated by Lucy's returning the passion which he hoped she might inspire. If she should adopt some romantic feelings towards Ravenswood, in which circumstances, or the positive and absolute opposition of Lady Ashton, might render it unadvisable to indulge her, the Lord Keeper conceived they might be easily superseded and annulled by a journey to Edinburgh, or even to London, a new set of Brussels lace, and the soft whispers of half a dozen lovers, anxious to replace him whom it was convenient she should renounce. This was his provision for the worst view of the case. But, according to its more probable issue, any

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passing favour she might entertain for the Master of Ravenswood, might require encouragement rather than repression.

This seemed the more likely, as he had that very morning, since their departure from the castle, received a letter, the contents of which he hastened to communicate to Ravenswood. A foot-post had arrived with a packet to the Lord Keeper from that friend whom we have already mentioned, who was labouring hard under-hand to consolidate a band of patriots, at the head of whom stood Sir William's greatest terror, the active and ambitious Marquis of A——. The success of this convenient friend had been such, that he had obtained from Sir William, not indeed a directly favourable answer, but certainly a most patient hearing. This he had reported to his principal, who had replied, by the ancient French adage, "*Château qui parle, et femme qui écoute, l'un et l'autre va se rendre.*" A statesman who hears you propose a change of measures without reply, was, according to the Marquis's opinion, in the situation of the fortress which parleys, and the lady who listens, and he resolved to press the siege of the Lord Keeper.

The packet, therefore, contained a letter from his friend and ally, and another from himself to the Lord Keeper, frankly offering an unceremonious visit. They were crossing the country to go to the southward—the roads were indifferent—the accommodation of the inns as execrable as possible—the Lord Keeper had been long acquainted intimately with one of his correspondents, and though more slightly known to the Marquis, had yet enough of his lordship's acquaintance to render the visit sufficiently natural, and to shut the mouths of those who might be disposed to impute it to a political intrigue. He instantly accepted the offered visit, determined, however, that he would not pledge himself an inch farther for the furtherance of their views than *reason* (by which he meant his own self-interest) should plainly point out to him as proper.

Two circumstances particularly delighted him; the presence of Ravenswood, and the absence of his own

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lady. By having the former under his roof, he conceived he might be able to quash all such hazardous and hostile proceedings as he might otherwise have been engaged in, under the patronage of the Marquis; and Lucy, he foresaw, would make, for his immediate purpose of delay and procrastination, a much better mistress of his family than her mother, who would, he was sure, in some shape or other, contrive to disconcert his political schemes by her proud and implacable temper.

His anxious solicitations that the Master would stay to receive his kinsman, were of course readily complied with, since the *éclaircissement* which had taken place at the Mermaiden's Fountain had removed all wish for sudden departure. Lucy and Lockhard had, therefore, orders to provide all things necessary in their different departments, for receiving the expected guests, with a pomp and display of luxury very uncommon in Scotland at that remote period.

CHAPTER XXI.

Marall. Sir, the man of honour's come,
Newly alighted——
Overreach. In without reply,
And do as I command.——
Is the loud music I gave order for
Ready to receive him?——
New Way to Pay Old Debts.

Sir William Ashton, although a man of sense, legal information, and great practical knowledge of the world, had yet some points of character which corresponded better with the timidity of his disposition and the supple arts by which he had risen in the world, than to the degree of eminence which he had attained; as they tended to show an original mediocrity of understanding, however

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highly it had been cultivated, and a native meanness of disposition, however carefully veiled. He loved the ostentatious display of his wealth, less as a man to whom habit has made it necessary, than as one to whom it is still delightful from its novelty. The most trivial details did not escape him; and Lucy soon learned to watch the flush of scorn which crossed Ravenswood's cheek, when he heard her father gravely arguing with Lockhard, nay, even with the old housekeeper, upon circumstances which, in families of rank, are left uncared for, because it is supposed impossible they can be neglected.

"I could pardon Sir William," said Ravenswood one evening after he had left the room, "some general anxiety upon this occasion, for the Marquis's visit is an honour, and should be received as such; but I am worn out by these miserable minutiæ of the buttery, and the larder, and the very hen-coop—they drive me beyond my patience; I would rather endure the poverty of Wolf's Crag, than be pestered with the wealth of Ravenswood Castle."

"And yet," said Lucy, "it was by attention to these minutiæ that my father acquired the property"——

"Which my ancestors sold for lack of it," replied Ravenswood. "Be it so; a porter still bears but a burden, though the burden be of gold."

Lucy sighed; she perceived too plainly that her lover held in scorn the manners and habits of a father, to whom she had long looked up as her best and most partial friend, whose fondness had often consoled her for her mother's contemptuous harshness.

The lovers soon discovered that they differed upon other and no less important topics. Religion, the mothe of peace, was, in those days of discord, so much misconstrued and mistaken, that her rules and forms were the subject of the most opposite opinions and the most hostile animosities. The Lord Keeper, being a whig, was, of course, a Presbyterian, and had found it convenient, at different periods, to express greater zeal for the kirk, than perhaps he really felt. His family, equally of course, were trained under the same institution. Ravenswood,

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as we know, was a High-Church man, or Episcopalian, and frequently objected to Lucy the fanaticism of some of her own communion, while she intimated, rather than expressed, horror at the latitudinarian principles which she had been taught to think connected with the prelatical form of church-government.

Thus, although their mutual affection seemed to increase rather than to be diminished, as their characters opened more fully on each other, the feelings of each were mingled with some less agreeable ingredients. Lucy felt a secret awe, amid all her affection for Ravenswood. His soul was of a higher, prouder character, than those with whom she had hitherto mixed in intercourse ; his ideas were more fierce and free ; and he contemned many of the opinions which had been inculcated upon her, as chiefly demanding her veneration. On the other hand, Ravenswood saw in Lucy a soft and flexible character, which in his eyes at least, seemed too susceptible of being moulded to any form by those with whom she lived. He felt that his own temper required a partner of a more independent spirit, who could set sail with him on his course of life, resolved as himself to dare indifferently the storm and the favouring breeze. But Lucy was so beautiful, so devotedly attached to him, of a temper so exquisitely soft and kind, that, while he could have wished it were possible to inspire her with a greater degree of firmness and resolution, and while he sometimes became impatient of the extreme fear which she expressed of their attachment being prematurely discovered, he felt that the softness of a mind, amounting almost to feebleness, rendered her even dearer to him, as a being who had voluntarily clung to him for protection, and made him the arbiter of her fate for weal or woe. His feelings towards her at such moments, were those which have been since so beautifully expressed by our immortal Joanna Baillie :

——————" Thou sweetest thing,
That e'er did fix its lightly-fibred sprays
To the rude rock, ah ! would'st thou cling to me ?

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Rough and storm-worn I am—yet love me as
Thou truly dost, I will love thee again
With true and honest heart, though all unmeet
To be the mate of such sweet gentleness."

Thus the very points in which they differed, seemed, in some measure, to ensure the continuance of their mutual affection. If, indeed, they had so fully appreciated each other's character before the burst of passion in which they hastily pledged their faith to each other, Lucy might have feared Ravenswood too much ever to have loved him, and he might have construed her softness and docile temper as imbecility, rendering her unworthy of his regard. But they stood pledged to each other; and Lucy only feared that her lover's pride might one day teach him to regret his attachment; Ravenswood, that a mind so ductile as Lucy's might, in absence or difficulties, be induced, by the entreaties or influence of those around her, to renounce the engagement she had formed.

"Do not fear it," said Lucy, when, upon one occasion, a hint of such suspicion escaped her lover; "the mirrors which receive the reflection of all successive objects are framed of hard materials like glass or steel—the softer substances, when they receive an impression, retain it undefaced."

"This is poetry, Lucy," said Ravenswood; "and in poetry there is always fallacy, and sometimes fiction."

"Believe me then, once more, in honest prose," said Lucy, "that, though I will never wed man without the consent of my parents, yet neither force nor persuasion shall dispose of my hand till you renounce the right I have given you to it."

The lovers had ample time for such explanations. Henry was now more seldom their companion, being either a most unwilling attendant upon the lessons of his tutor, or a forward volunteer under the instructions of the foresters or grooms. As for the Keeper, his mornings were spent in his study, maintaining correspondences of all kinds, and balancing in his anxious mind the various intelligence which he collected from every quarter concern-

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ing the expected change of Scottish politics, and the probable strength of the parties who were about to struggle for power. At other times he busied himself about arranging, and countermanding, and then again arranging, the preparations which he judged necessary for the reception of the Marquis of A——, whose arrival had been twice delayed by some necessary cause of detention.

In the midst of all these various avocations, political and domestic, he seemed not to observe how much his daughter and his guest were thrown into each other's society, and was censured by many of his neighbours, according to the fashion of neighbours in all countries, for suffering such an intimate connection to take place betwixt two young persons. The only natural explanation was, that he designed them for each other; while, in truth, his only motive was to temporize and procrastinate, until he should discover the real extent of the interest which the Marquis took in Ravenswood's affairs, and the power which he was likely to possess of advancing them. Until these points should be made both clear and manifest, the Lord Keeper resolved that he would do nothing to commit himself, either in one shape or other; and, like many cunning persons, he overreached himself deplorably.

Amongst those who had been disposed to censure, with the greatest severity, the conduct of Sir William Ashton, in permitting the prolonged residence of Ravenswood under his roof, and his constant attendance on Miss Ashton, was the new Laird of Girnington, and his faithful squire and bottle-holder, personages formerly well known to us by the names of Hayston and Bucklaw, and his companion Captain Craigengelt. The former had at length succeeded to the extensive property of his long-lived grandaunt, and to considerable wealth besides, which he had employed in redeeming his paternal acres, (by the title appertaining to which he still chose to be designated,) notwithstanding Captain Craigengelt had proposed to him a most advantageous mode of vesting the money in Law's scheme, which was just then broached, and offered his

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services to travel express to Paris for the purpose. But Bucklaw had so far derived wisdom from adversity, that he would listen to no proposal which Craigengelt could invent, which had the slightest tendency to risk his newly-acquired independence. He that had once eat pease-bannocks, drank sour wine, and slept in the secret chamber at Wolf's Crag, would, he said, prize good cheer and a soft bed as long as he lived, and take special care never to need such hospitality again.

Craigengelt, therefore, found himself disappointed in the first hopes he had entertained of making a good hand of the Laird of Bucklaw. Still, however, he reaped many advantages from his friend's good fortune. Bucklaw, who had never been at all scrupulous in choosing his companions, was accustomed to, and entertained by a fellow, whom he could either laugh with or laugh at as he had a mind, who would take, according to Scottish phrase, "the bit and the buffet," understood all sports, whether within or without doors, and, when the Laird had a mind for a bottle of wine, (no infrequent circumstance,) was always ready to save him from the scandal of getting drunk by himself. Upon these terms, Craigengelt was the frequent, almost the constant, inmate of the house of Girnington.

In no time, and under no possibility of circumstances, could good have been derived from such an intimacy, however its bad consequences might be qualified by the thorough knowledge which Bucklaw possessed of his dependant's character, and the high contempt in which he held it. But, as circumstances stood, this evil communication was particularly liable to corrupt what good principles nature had implanted in the patron.

Craigengelt had never forgiven the scorn with which Ravenswood had torn the mask of courage and honesty from his countenance; and to exasperate Bucklaw's resentment against him, was the safest mode of revenge which occurred to his cowardly, yet cunning and malignant disposition.

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He brought up, on all occasions, the story of the challenge which Ravenswood had declined to accept, and endeavoured, by every possible insinuation, to make his patron believe that his honour was concerned in bringing that matter to an issue by a present discussion with Ravenswood. But respecting this subject, Bucklaw imposed on him, at length, a peremptory command of silence.

"I think," he said, "the Master has treated me unlike gentleman, and I see no right he had to send me back a cavalier answer when I demanded the satisfaction of one —But he gave me my life once—and, in looking the matter over at present, I put myself but on equal terms with him. Should he cross me again, I shall consider the old accompt as balanced, and his Mastership will do well to look to himself."

"That he should," re-echoed Craigengelt; "for when you are in practice, Bucklaw, I would bet a magnum you are through him before the third pass."

"Then you know nothing of the matter," said Bucklaw, "and you never saw him fence."

"And I know nothing of the matter?" said the dependant, "a good jest, I promise you!—and though I never saw Ravenswood fence, have I not been at Monsieur Sagoon's school, who was the first *maitre d'armes* at Paris; and have I not been at Signor Poco's at Florence, and Meinheer Durchstossen's at Vienna, and have I not seen all their play?"

"I don't know whether you have or not," said Bucklaw; "but what about it, though you had?"

"Only that I will be d—d if ever I saw French, Italian, or High-Dutchman ever make foot, hand, and eye, keep time half so well as you, Bucklaw."

"I believe you lie, Craigie," said Bucklaw; "however, I can hold my own, both with single rapier, back-sword, sword and dagger, broad-sword, or case of falchions—and that's as much as any gentleman need know of the matter."

"And the double of what ninety-nine out of a hundred know," said Craigengelt; "they learn to change a few thrusts with the small-sword, and then, forsooth, they un-

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derstand the noble art of defence! Now, when I was at Rouen in the year 1695, there was a Chevalier de Chapon and I went to the Opera, where we found three bits of English birkies"——

"Is it a long story you are going to tell?" said Bucklaw, interrupting him without ceremony.

"Just as you like," answered the parasite, "for we made short work of it."

"Then I like it short," said Bucklaw; "is it serious or merry?"

"Devilish serious, I assure you, and so they found it; for the chevalier and I"——

"Then I don't like it at all," said Bucklaw; "so fill a brimmer of my auld auntie's claret, rest her heart! And, as the Hielandman says, *Skioch doch na skiaill.*"*

"That was what tough old Sir Evan Dhu used to say to me when I was out with the metall'd lads in 1689. 'Craigengelt,' he used to say, 'you are as pretty a fellow as ever held steel in his grip, but you have one fault.'"

"If he had known you as long as I have done," said Bucklaw, "he would have found out some twenty more; but hang long stories, give us your toast, man."

Craigengelt rose, went a tiptoe to the door, peeped out, shut it carefully, came back again—clapped his tarnished gold-laced hat on one side of his head, took his glass in one hand, and touching the hilt of his hanger with the other, named, "The King over the water."

"I tell you what it is, Captain Craigengelt," said Bucklaw; "I shall keep my mind to myself on these subjects, having too much respect for the memory of my venerable aunt Girnington to put her lands and tenements in the way of committing treason against established authority. Bring me King James to Edinburgh, Captain, with thirty thousand men at his back, and I'll tell you what I think about his title; but as for running my neck into a noose, and my good broad lands into the statutory penalties, 'in

* "Cut a drink with a tale;" equivalent to the English adage of "booh companions, don't preach over your liquor."

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that case made and provided,' rely upon it you will find me no such fool. So when you mean to vapour with your hanger and your dram-cup in support of treasonable toasts, you must find your liquor and company elsewhere."

"Well, then," said Craigengelt, "name the toast yourself, and be it what it like, I'll pledge you were it a mile to the bottom."

"And I'll give you a toast that deserves it, my boy," said Bucklaw; "what say you to Miss Lucy Ashton?"

"Up with it," said the captain, as he tossed off his brimmer, "the bonniest lass in Lothian. What a pity the old sneck-drawing whigamore, her father, is about to throw her away upon that rag of pride and beggary, the Master of Ravenswood!"

"That's not quite so clear," said Bucklaw, in a tone, which, though it seemed indifferent, excited his companion's eager curiosity; and not that only, but also his hope of working himself into some sort of confidence, which might make him necessary to his patron, being by no means satisfied to rest on mere sufferance, if he could form by art or industry a more permanent title to his favour.

"I thought," said he, after a moment's pause, "that was a settled matter—they are continually together, and nothing else is spoken of betwixt Lammerlaw and Traprain."

"They may say what they please," replied his patron, "but I know better, and I'll give you Miss Lucy Ashton's health again, my boy."

"And I would drink it on my knee," said Craigengelt, "if I thought the girl had the spirit to jilt that d—d son of a Spaniard."

"I am to request you will not use the word jilt and Miss Ashton's name together," said Bucklaw, gravely.

"Jilt, did I say?—discard, my lad of acres—by Jove I meant to say discard;" replied Craigengelt, "and I hope she'll discard him like a small card at piquet, and take in the King of Hearts, my boy—But yet"——

"But what?" said his patron.

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"But yet I know for certain they are hours together alone, and in the woods and the fields."

"That's her foolish father's dotage—that will be soon put out of the lass's head, if it ever gets into it," answered Bucklaw. "And now fill your glass again, Captain, I am going to make you happy—I am going to let you into a secret—a plot—a noosing plot—only the noose is but typical."

"A marrying matter?" said Craigengelt, and his jaw fell as he asked the question; for he suspected that matrimony would render his situation at Girnington much more precarious than during the jolly days of his patron's bachelorhood.

"Ay, a marriage, man," said Bucklaw; "but wherefore droops thy mighty spirit, and why grow the rubies on thy cheek so pale? The board will have a corner, and the corner will have a trencher, and the trencher will have a glass beside it; and the board-end shall be filled, and the trencher and the glass shall be replenished for thee, if all the petticoats in Lothian had sworn the contrary—What, man! I am not the boy to put myself into leading strings."

"So says many an honest fellow," said Craigengelt, "and some of my special friends; but, curse me if I know the reason, the women could never bear me, and always contrived to trundle me out of favour before the honey-moon was over."

"If you could have kept your ground till that was over, you might have made a good year's pension," said Bucklaw.

"But I never could," answered the dejected parasite; "there was my Lord Castle-Cuddy—we were hand and glove—I rode his horses—borrowed money, both for him and from him—trained his hawks, and taught him how to lay his bets; and when he took a fancy of marrying, I married him to Katie Glegg, whom I thought myself as sure of as man could be of woman. Egad, she had me out of the house, as if I had run on wheels, within the first fortnight!"

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"Well!" replied Bucklaw, "I think I have nothing of Castle-Cuddy about me, or Lucy of Katie Glegg. But you see the thing will go on whether you like it or no—the only question is, will you be useful?"

"Useful?" exclaimed the Captain;—"and to thee, my lad of lands, my darling boy, whom I would cramp bare-footed through the world for?—name time, place, mode, and circumstances, and see if I will not be useful in all uses that can be devised."

"Why, then, you must ride two hundred miles for me," said the patron.

"A thousand, and call them a flea's leap," answered the dependant; "I'll cause saddle my horse directly."

"Better stay till you know where you are to go, and what you are to do," quoth Bucklaw. "You know I have a kinswoman in Northumberland, Lady Blenkensop by name, whose old acquaintance I had the misfortune to lose in the period of my poverty, but the light of whose countenance shone forth upon me when the sun of my prosperity began to arise."

"D—n all such double-faced jades!" exclaimed Craigengelt, heroically; "this I will say for John Craigengelt, that he is his friend's friend through good report and bad report, poverty and riches; and you know something of that yourself, Bucklaw."

"I have not forgot your merits," said his patron; "I do remember, that, in my extremities, you had a mind to *crimp* me for the service of the French King, or of the Pretender; and, moreover, that you afterwards lent me a score of pieces, when, as I firmly believe, you had heard the news that old Lady Girnington had a touch of the dead palsy. But don't be down-cast, John; I believe, after all, you like me very well in your way, and it is my misfortune to have no better counsellor at present. To return to this Lady Blenkensop, you must know she is a close confederate of Duchess Sarah."

"What! of Sall Jennings?" exclaimed Craigengelt; "then she must be a good one."

"Hold your tongue, and keep your Tory rants to yourself, if it be possible," said Bucklaw; "I tell you, that

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through the Duchess of Marlborough has this Northumbrian cousin of mine become a crony of Lady Ashton, the Keeper's wife, or, I may say the Lord Keeper's Lady Keeper, and she has favoured Lady Blenkensop with a visit on her return from London, and is just now at her old mansion-house on the banks of the Wansbeck. Now, sir, as it has been the use and wont of these ladies to consider their husbands as of no importance in the management of their own families, it has been their present pleasure, without consulting Sir William Ashton, to put on the *tapis* a matrimonial alliance, to be concluded between Lucy Ashton and my own right honourable self, Lady Ashton acting as self-constituted plenipotentiary on the part of her daughter and husband, and Mother Blenkensop, equally unaccredited, doing me the honour to be my representative. You may suppose I was a little astonished when I found that a treaty, in which I was so considerably interested, had advanced a good way before I was even consulted."

"Capot me if I think that was according to the rules of the game," said his confidant; "and pray, what answer did you return?"

"Why, my first thought was to send the treaty to the devil, and the negociators along with it, for a couple of meddling old women; my next was to laugh very heartily; and my third and last was a settled opinion that the thing was reasonable, and would suit me well enough."

"Why, I thought you had never seen the wench but once—and then she had her riding-mask on—I am sure you told me so."

"Ay—but I liked her very well then. And Ravenswood's dirty usage of me—shutting me out of doors to dine with the lacqueys, because he had the Lord Keeper, forsooth, and his daughter, to be guests in his beggarly castle of starvation—D—n me, Craigengelt, if I ever forgive him till I play him as good a trick!"

"No more you should, if you are a lad of mettle," said Craigengelt, the matter now taking a turn in which

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ne could sympathize; "and if you carry this wench from him, it will break his heart."

"That it will not," said Bucklaw; "his heart is all steeled over with reason and philosophy—things that you, Craigie, know nothing about more than myself, God help me—But it will break his pride though, and that's what I'm driving at."

"Distance me," said Craigengelt, "but I know the reason now of his unmannerly behaviour at his old tumble-down tower yonder—Ashamed of your company?—no, no!—Gad, he was afraid you would cut in and carry off the girl."

"Eh! Craigengelt?" said Bucklaw—"do you really think so?—but no, no! he is a devilish deal prettier man than I am."

"Who—he?" exclaimed the parasite—"he is as black as the crook; and for his size—he's a tall fellow, to be sure—but give me a light, stout, middle-sized"——

"Plague on thee!" said Bucklaw, interrupting him, "and on me for listening to you!—you would say as much if I were hunch-backed. But as to Ravenswood—he has kept no terms with me—I'll keep none with him—if I *can* win this girl from him, I *will* win her."

"Win her?—'sblood, you *shall* win her, point, quint, and quatorze, my king of trumps—you shall pique, repique, and capot him."

"Prithee, stop thy gambling cant for one instant," said Bucklaw. Things have come thus far, that I have entertained the proposal of my kinswoman, agreed to the terms of jointure, amount of fortune, and so forth, and that the affair is to go forward when Lady Ashton comes down, for she takes her daughter and her son in her own hand. Now they want me to send up a confidential person with some writings."

"By this good wine, I'll ride to the end of the world—the very gates of Jericho, and the judgment-seat of Prester John, for thee!" ejaculated the Captain.

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"Why, I believe you would do something for me, and a great deal for yourself. Now, any one could carry the writings; but you will have a little more to do. You must contrive to drop out before my Lady Ashton, just as if it were a matter of little consequence, the residence of Ravenswood at her husband's house, and his close intercourse with Miss Ashton; and you may tell her, that all the country talks of a visit from the Marquis of A——, as it is supposed, to make up the match betwixt Ravenswood and her daughter. I should like to hear what she says to all this; for, rat me, if I have any idea of starting for the plate at all if Ravenswood is to win the race, and he has odds against me already."

"Never a bit—the wench has too much sense—and in that belief I drink her health the third time; and, were time and place fitting, I would drink it on bended knees, and he that would not pledge me, I would make his guts garter his stockings."

"Hark ye, Craigengelt; as you are going into the society of women of rank," said Bucklaw, "I'll thank you to forget your strange blackguard oaths and damme's—I'll write to them, though, that you are a blunt untaught fellow."

"Ay, ay," replied Craigengelt; "a plain, blunt, honest, downright soldier."

"Not too honest, nor too much of the soldier neither; but, such as thou art, it is my luck to need thee, for I must have spurs put to Lady Ashton's motions."

"I'll dash them up to the rowel-heads," said Craigengelt; "she shall come here at the gallop, like a cow chased by a whole nest of hornets, and her tail twisted over her rump like a corkscrew."

"And hear ye, Cragie," said Bucklaw; "your boots and doublet are good enough to drink in, as the man says in the play, but they are somewhat too greasy for tea-table service—prithee, get thyself a little better rigged out, and here is to pay all charges."

"Nay, Bucklaw—on my soul, man—you use me ill—however," added Craigengelt, pocketing the money,

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"if you will have me so far indebted to you, I must be conforming."

"Well, horse and away!" said the patron, "so soon as you have got your riding livery in trim. You may ride the black crop-ear—and, hark ye, I'll make you a present of him to boot."

"I drink to the good luck of my mission," answered the ambassador, "in a half-pint bumper."

"I thank ye, Craigie, and pledge you—I see nothing against it but the father or the girl taking a tantrum, and I am told the mother can wind them both round her little finger. Take care not to affront her with any of your Jacobite jargon."

"O ay, true—she is a whig, and a friend of old Sall of Marlborough—thank my stars, I can hoist any colours at a pinch, I have fought as hard under John Churchill as ever I did under Dundee or the Duke of Berwick."

"I verily believe you, Craigie," said the lord of the mansion; "but, Craigie, do you, pray, step down to the cellar and fetch us up a bottle of the burgundy, 1678—it is in the fourth bin from the right-hand turn—And I say, Craigie, you may fetch up half-a-dozen whilst you are about it—Egad, we'll make a night on't!"

CHAPTER XXII.

> And soon they espied the merry-men green,
> And eke the coach and four.
>
> *Duke upon Duke.*

CRAIGENGELT set forth on his mission, so soon as his equipage was complete, prosecuted his journey with all diligence, and accomplished his commission with all the dexterity for which Bucklaw had given him credit. As he arrived with credentials from Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, he was extremely welcome to both ladies; and those

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who are prejudiced in favour of a new acquaintance, can, for a time at least, discover excellences in his very faults, and perfections in his deficiencies. Although both ladies were accustomed to good society, yet, being pre-determined to find out an agreeable and well-behaved gentleman in Mr. Hayston's friend, they succeeded wonderfully in imposing on themselves. It is true that Craigengelt was now handsomely dressed, and that was a point of no small consequence. But, independent of outward show, his blackguard impudence of address was construed into honourable bluntness, becoming his supposed military profession; his hectoring passed for courage, and his sauciness for wit. Lest, however, any one should think this a violation of probability, we must add, in fairness to the two ladies, that their discernment was greatly blinded, and their favour propitiated, by the opportune arrival of Captain Craigengelt in the moment when they were longing for a third hand to make a party at tredrille, in which, as in all games, whether of chance or skill, that worthy person was a great proficient.

When he found himself established in favour, his next point was how best to use it for the furtherance of his patron's views. He found Lady Ashton prepossessed strongly in favour of the motion, which Lady Blenkensop, partly from regard to her kinsman, partly from the spirit of match-making, had not hesitated to propose to her; so that his task was an easy one. Bucklaw, reformed from his prodigality, was just the sort of husband which she desired to have for her Shepherdess of Lammermoor; and while the marriage gave her an easy fortune, and a respectable country gentleman for her husband, Lady Ashton was of opinion that her destinies would be fully and most favourably accomplished. It so chanced, also, that Bucklaw, among his new acquisitions, had gained the management of a little political interest in a neighbouring county, where the Douglas family originally held large possessions. It was one of the bosom-hopes of Lady Ashton, that her eldest son, Sholto, should represent this county in the British Parliament, and she saw this alliance with Bucklaw as a

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circumstance which might be highly favourable to her wishes.

Craigengelt, who in his way by no means wanted sagacity, no sooner discovered in what quarter the wind of Lady Ashton's wishes sat, than he trimmed his course accordingly. "There was little to prevent Bucklaw himself from sitting for the county—he must carry the heat—must walk the course. Two cousins-german—six more distant kinsmen, his factor and his chamberlain, were all hollow votes—and the Girnington interest had always carried, betwixt love and fear, about as many more —But Bucklaw cared no more about riding the first horse, and that sort of thing, than he, Craigengelt, did about a game at birkie—it was a pity his interest was not in good guidance."

All this Lady Ashton drank in with willing and attentive ears, resolving internally to be herself the person who should take the management of the political influence of her destined son-in-law, for the benefit of her eldest born, Sholto, and all other parties concerned.

When he found her ladyship thus favourably disposed, the Captain proceeded, to use his employer's phrase, to set spurs to her resolution, by hinting at the situation of matters at Ravenswood Castle, the long residence which the heir of that family had made with the Lord Keeper, and the reports which (though he would be d—d ere he gave credit to any of them) had been idly circulated in the neighbourhood. It was not the Captain's cue to appear himself to be uneasy on the subject of these rumours; but he easily saw from Lady Ashton's flushed cheek, hesitating voice, and flashing eye, that she had caught the alarm which he intended to communicate. She had not heard from her husband so often or so regularly as she thought him bound in duty to have written; and of this very interesting intelligence, concerning his visit to the Tower of Wolf's Crag, and the guest whom, with such cordiality, he had received at Ravenswood Castle, he had suffered his lady to remain altogether ignorant, until she

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now learned it by the chance information of a stranger. Such concealment approached, in her apprehension, to a misprision, at least, of treason, if not to actual rebellion against her matrimonial authority; and in her inward soul did she vow to take vengeance on the Lord Keeper, as on a subject detected in meditating revolt. Her indignation burned the more fiercely, as she found herself obliged to suppress it in presence of Lady Blenkensop, the kinswoman, and of Craigengelt, the confidential friend of Bucklaw, of whose alliance she now became trebly desirous, since it occurred to her alarmed imagination, that her husband might, in his policy or timidity, prefer that of Ravenswood.

The Captain was engineer enough to discover that the train was fired; and therefore heard, in the course of the same day, without the least surprise, that Lady Ashton had resolved to abridge her visit to Lady Blenkensop, and set forth with the peep of morning on her return to Scotland, using all the despatch which the state of the roads, and the mode of travelling would possibly permit.

Unhappy Lord Keeper!—little was he aware what a storm was travelling towards him in all the speed with which an old-fashioned coach and six could possibly achieve its journey. He, like Don Gayferos, "forgot his lady fair and true," and was only anxious about the expected visit of the Marquis of A——. Soothfast tidings had assured him that this nobleman was at length and without fail, to honour his castle at one in the afternoon, being a late dinner-hour; and much was the bustle in consequence of the annunciation. The Lord Keeper traversed the chambers, held consultation with the butler in the cellars, and even ventured at the risk of a *démêlé* with a cook, of a spirit lofty enough to scorn the admonitions of Lady Ashton herself, to peep into the kitchen. Satisfied, at length, that every thing was in as active a train of preparation as was possible, he summoned Ravenswood and his daughter to walk upon the terrace, for the purpose of watching, from that commanding position, the earliest symptoms of his lordship's approach. For this

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purpose, with slow and idle step, he paraded the terrace, which, flanked with a heavy stone battlement stretched in front of the castle, upon a level with the first story; while visiters found access to the court by a projecting gate-way, the barbizan or flat-leaded roof of which was accessible from the terrace by an easy flight of low and and broad steps. The whole bore a resemblance partly to a castle, partly to a nobleman's seat; and though calculated, in some respects, for defence, evinced that it had been constructed under a sense of the power and security of the ancient Lords of Ravenswood.

This pleasant walk commanded a beautiful and extensive view. But what was most to our present purpose, there were seen from the terrace two roads, one leading from the east, and one from the westward, which, crossing a ridge opposed to the eminence on which the castle stood, at different angles, gradually approached each other, until they joined not far from the gate of the avenue. It was to the westward approach that the Lord Keeper, from a sort of fidgetting anxiety, his daughter, from complaisance to him, and Ravenswood, though feeling some symptoms of internal impatience, out of complaisance to his daughter, directed their eyes to see the precursors of the Marquis's approach.

These were not long of presenting themselves. Two running footmen, dressed in white, with black jockey-caps, and long staffs in their hands, headed the train; and such was their agility, that they found no difficulty in keeping the necessary advance, which the etiquette of their station required, before the carriage and horsemen. Onward they came at a long swinging trot, arguing unwearied speed in their long-breathed calling. Such running footmen are often alluded to in old plays, (I would particularly instance "Middleton's Mad World my Masters,") and perhaps may be still remembered by some old persons in Scotland, as part of the retinue of the ancient nobility when travelling in full ceremony.* Be-

* Hereupon, I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, crave leave to remark, *primo*, which signifies, in the first place, that, having in vain inquired at the Circulating Li-

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hind these glancing meteors, who footed it as if the Avenger of Blood had been behind them, came a cloud of dust, raised by riders who preceded, attended, or followed, the state-carriage of the Marquis.

The privilege of nobility, in those days, had something in it impressive on the imagination. The dresses, and liveries, and number of their attendants, their style of travelling, the imposing and almost warlike air of the armed men who surrounded them, placed them far above the laird, who travelled with his brace of footmen; and as to rivalry from the mercantile part of the community, these would as soon have thought of imitating the state equipage of the Sovereign. At present it is different; and I myself, Peter Pattieson, in a late journey to Edinburgh, had the honour, in the mail-coach phrase, to "change a leg" with a peer of the realm. It was not so in the days of which I write; and the Marquis's approach, so long expected in vain, now took place in the full pomp of ancient aristocracy. Sir William Ashton was so much interested in what he beheld, and in considering the ceremonial of reception in case any circumstance had been omitted, that he scarce heard his son Henry exclaim, "there is another coach and six coming down the east road, papa—can they both belong to the Marquis of A—— ?"

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brary in Gandercleugh, albeit it aboundeth in similar vanities, for this samyn Middleton and his Mad World, it was at length shown unto me amongst other ancient fooleries, carefully compiled by one Dodsley, who, doubtless, hath his reward for neglect of precious time; and having misused so much of mine as was necessary for the purpose, I therein found that a play-man is brought in as a footman, whom a knight is made to greet facetiously with the epithet of "linen stocking, and three-score miles a-day."

Secundo, (which is secondly in the vernacular,) under Mr. Pattieson's favour, some men not altogether so old as he would represent them, do remember this species of menial, or fore-runner. In evidence of which, I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, though mine eyes yet do me good service, remember me to have seen one of this tribe clothed in white, and bearing a staff, who ran daily before the state-coach of the umquhile John, Earl of Hopeton, father of this Earl, Charles, that now is; unto whom it may be justly said, that Renown playeth the part of a running footman, or precursor; and, as the poet singeth—

"Mars standing by asserts his quarrel,
And fame flies after with a laurel." J. C.

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At length, when the youngster had fairly compelled his attention by pulling his sleeve,

> "He turned his eyes, and, as he turn'd, survey'd
> An awful vision."

Sure enough, another coach and six, with four servants or out-riders in attendance, was descending the hill from the eastward, at such a pace as made it doubtful which of the carriages thus approaching from different quarters would first reach the gate at the extremity of the avenue. The one coach was green, the other blue; and not the green and blue chariots in the Circus of Rome or Constantinople excited more turmoil among the citizens than the double apparition occasioned in the mind of the Lord Keeper. We all remember the terrible exclamation of the dying profligate, when a friend, to destroy what he supposed the hypochondriac idea of a spectre appearing in a certain shape at a given hour, placed before him a person dressed up in the manner he described. "*Mon Dieu!*" said the expiring sinner, who, it seems, saw both the real and polygraphic apparition—"*il y en a deux!*"

The surprise of the Lord Keeper was scarcely less unpleasing at the duplication of the expected arrival; his mind misgave him strangely. There was no neighbour who would have approached so unceremoniously, at a time when ceremony was held in such respect. It must be Lady Ashton, said his conscience, and followed up the hint with an anxious anticipation of the purpose of her sudden and unannounced return. He felt that he was caught "in the manner." That the company in which she had so unluckily surprised him was likely to be highly distasteful to her, there was no question; and the only hope which remained for him was her high sense of dignified propriety, which, he trusted, might prevent a public explosion. But so active were his doubts and fears, as altogether to derange his purposed ceremonial for the reception of the Marquis.

These feelings of apprehension were not confined to Sir William Ashton. "It is my mother—it is my moth-

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er !" said Lucy, turning as pale as ashes, and clasping her hands together as she looked at Ravenswood.

" And if it be Lady Ashton," said her lover to her in a low tone, " what can be the occasion of such alarm ?— Surely the return of a lady to the family from which she has been so long absent, should excite other sensations than those of fear and dismay."

" You do not know my mother," said Miss Ashton, in a tone almost breathless with terror ; " what will she say when she sees you in this place !"

" My stay has been too long," said Ravenswood, somewhat haughtily, " if her displeasure at my presence is likely to be so formidable. My dear Lucy," he resumed, in a tone of soothing encouragement, you are too childishly afraid of Lady Ashton ; she is a woman of family—a lady of fashion—a person who must know the world, and what is due to her husband and her husband's guests."

Lucy shook her head ; and, as if her mother, still at the distance of half a mile, could have seen and scrutinized her deportment, she withdrew herself from beside Ravenswood, and taking her brother Henry's arm, led him to a different part of the terrace. The Keeper also shuffled down towards the portal of the great gate, without inviting Ravenswood to accompany him, and thus he remained standing alone on the terrace, deserted and shunned, as it were, by the inhabitants of the mansion.

This suited not the mood of one who was proud in proportion to his poverty, and who thought that, in sacrificing his deep-rooted resentments so far as to become Sir William Ashton's guest, he conferred a favour and received none. " I can forgive Lucy," he said to himself ; " she is young, timid, and conscious of an important engagement assumed without her mother's sanction ; yet she should remember with whom it has been assumed, and leave me no reason to suspect that she is ashamed of her choice. For the Keeper, sense, spirit, and expression seem to have left his face and manner since he had the first glimpse of Lady Ashton's carriage. I must watch how this is to

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end; and, if they give me reason to think myself an unwelcome guest, my visit is soon abridged."

With these suspicions floating on his mind, he left the terrace, and, walking towards the stables of the castle, gave directions that his horse should be kept in readiness, in case that he should have occasion to ride abroad.

In the meanwhile the drivers of the two carriages, the approach of which had occasioned so much dismay at the castle, had become aware of each other's presence, as they approached upon different lines to the head of the avenue, as a common centre. Lady Ashton's driver and postilions instantly received orders to get foremost, if possible, her ladyship being desirous of despatching her first interview with her husband before the arrival of these guests, whoever they might happen to be. On the other hand, the coachman of the Marquis, conscious of his own dignity and that of his master, and observing the rival charioteer was mending his pace, resolved, like a true brother of the whip, whether ancient or modern, to vindicate his right of precedence. So that, to increase the confusion of the Lord Keeper's understanding, he saw the short time which remained for consideration abridged by the haste of the contending coachmen, who, fixing their eyes sternly on each other, and applying the lash smartly to their horses, began to thunder down the descent with emulous rapidity, while the horsemen who attended them were forced to put on to a hand-gallop.

Sir William's only chance now remaining was the possibility of an overturn, and that his lady or visiter might break their necks. I am not aware that he formed any distinct wish on the subject, but I have no reason to think that his grief in either case would have been altogether inconsolable. This chance, however, also disappeared; for Lady Ashton, though insensible to fear, began to see the ridicule of running a race with a visiter of distinction, the goal being the portal of her own castle, and commanded her coachman, as they approached the avenue, to slacken his pace and allow precedence to the stranger's equipage; a command which he gladly obeyed, as coming in time

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to save his honour, the horses of the Marquis's carriage being better, or, at least, fresher than his own. He restrained his pace, therefore, and suffered the green coach to enter the avenue, with all its retinue, which pass it occupied with the speed of a whirlwind. The Marquis's laced charioteer no sooner found the *pas d'avance* was granted to him, than he resumed a more deliberate pace, at which he advanced under the embowering shade of the lofty elms, surrounded by all the attendants; while the carriage of Lady Ashton followed still more slowly at some distance.

In the front of the castle, and beneath the portal which admitted guests into the inner court, stood Sir William Ashton, much perplexed in mind, his younger son and daughter beside him, and in their rear a train of attendants of various ranks, in and out of livery. The nobility and gentry of Scotland, at this period, were remarkable even to extravagance for the number of their servants, whose services were easily purchased in a country where men were numerous beyond proportion to the means of employing them.

The manners of a man, trained like Sir William Ashton, are too much at his command to remain long disconcerted with the most adverse concurrence of circumstances. He received the Marquis, as he alighted from his equipage, with the usual compliments of welcome; and as he ushered him into the great hall, expressed his hope that his journey had been pleasant. The Marquis was a tall, well-made man, with a thoughtful and intelligent countenance, and an eye in which the fire of ambition had for some years replaced the vivacity of youth; a bold, proud expression of countenance, yet chastened by habitual caution, and the desire which, as the head of a party, he necessarily entertained of acquiring popularity. He answered with courtesy the courteous inquiries of the Lord Keeper, and was formally presented to Miss Ashton, in the course of which ceremony the Lord Keeper gave the first symptom of what was chiefly occupying

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his mind, by introducing his daughter as "his wife, Lady Ashton."

Lucy blushed; the Marquis looked surprised at the extremely juvenile appearance of his hostess, and the Lord Keeper with difficulty rallied himself so far as to explain. "I should have said my daughter, my lord; but the truth is that I saw Lady Ashton's carriage enter the avenue shortly after your lordship's, and"——

"Make no apology my lord," replied his noble guest; "let me entreat you will wait on your lady, and leave me to cultivate Miss Ashton's acquaintance. I am shocked my people should have taken precedence of our hostess at her own gate; but your lordship is aware, that I supposed Lady Ashton was still in the south. Permit me to beseech you will wave ceremony, and hasten to welcome her."

This was precisely what the Lord Keeper longed to do; and he instantly profited by his lordship's obliging permission. To see Lady Ashton, and encounter the first burst of her displeasure in private, might prepare her, in some degree, to receive her unwelcomed guests with due decorum. As her carriage, therefore, stopped, the arm of the attentive husband was ready to assist Lady Ashton in dismounting. Looking as if she saw him not, she put his arm aside, and requested that of Captain Craigengelt, who stood by the coach with his laced hat under his arm, having acted as *cavalière servente*, or squire in attendance, during the journey. Taking hold of this respectable person's arm as if to support her, Lady Ashton traversed the court, uttering a word or two by way of direction to the servants, but not one to Sir William, who in vain endeavoured to attract her attention, as he rather followed than accompanied her into the hall, in which they found the Marquis in close conversation with the Master of Ravenswood: Lucy had taken the first opportunity of escaping. There was embarrassment on every countenance except that of the Marquis of A——; for even Craigengelt's impudence was hardly able to veil

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his fear of Ravenswood, and the rest felt the awkwardness of the position in which they were thus unexpectedly placed.

After waiting a moment to be presented by Sir William Ashton, the Marquis resolved to introduce himself. "The Lord Keeper," he said, "bowing to Lady Ashton, "has just introduced to me his daughter as his wife—he might very easily present Lady Ashton as his daughter, so little does she differ from what I remember her some years since—Will she permit an old acquaintance the privilege of a guest?"

He saluted the lady with too good a grace to apprehend a repulse, and then proceeded—"This, Lady Ashton, is a peace-making visit, and therefore I presume to introduce my cousin, the young Master of Ravenswood to your favourable notice."

Lady Ashton could not choose but curtsy; but there was in her obeisance an air of haughtiness approaching to contemptuous repulse. Ravenswood could not choose but bow; but his manner returned the scorn with which he had been greeted.

"Allow me," she said, "to present to your lordship *my* friend." Craigengelt, with the forward impudence which men of his cast mistake for ease, made a sliding bow to the Marquis, which he graced by a flourish of his gold-laced hat. The lady turned to her husband—"You and I, Sir William," she said, and these were the first words she had addressed to him, "have acquired new acquaintances since we parted—let me introduce the acquisition I have made to mine—Captain Craigengelt."

Another bow, and another flourish of the gold-laced hat, which was returned by the Lord Keeper without intimation of former recognition, and with that sort of anxious readiness, which intimated his wish, that peace and amnesty should take place betwixt the contending parties, including the auxiliaries on both sides. "Let me introduce you to the Master of Ravenswood," said he to Captain Craigengelt, following up the same amicable system. But the Master drew up his tall form to the full extent

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of his height, and without so much as looking towards the person thus introduced to him, he said, in a marked tone, "Captain Craigengelt and I are already perfectly well acquainted with each other."

"Perfectly—perfectly," replied the Captain, in a mumbling tone, like that of a double echo, and with a flourish of his hat, the circumference of which was greatly abridged, compared with those which had so cordially graced his introduction to the Marquis and the Lord Keeper.

Lockhard, followed by three menials, now entered with wine and refreshments, which it was the fashion to offer as a whet before dinner; and when they were placed before the guests, Lady Ashton made an apology for withdrawing her husband from them for some minutes upon business of special import. The Marquis of course, requested her ladyship would lay herself under no restraint; and Craigengelt, bolting with speed a second glass of racy canary, hastened to leave the room, feeling no great pleasure in the prospect of being left alone with the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood; the presence of the former holding him in awe, and that of the latter in bodily terror.

Some arrangements about his horse and baggage formed the pretext for his sudden retreat, in which he persevered, although Lady Ashton gave Lockhard orders to be careful most particularly to accommodate Captain Craigengelt with all the attendance which he could possibly require. The Marquis and the Master of Ravenswood were thus left to communicate to each other their remarks upon the reception which they had met with, while Lady Ashton led the way, and her lord followed somewhat like a condemned criminal, to her ladyship's dressing-room.

So soon as the spouses had both entered, her ladyship gave way to that fierce audacity of temper, which she had with difficulty suppressed, out of respect to appearances. She shut the door behind the alarmed Lord Keeper, took the key out of the spring-lock, and, with a countenance which years had not bereft of its haughty charms, and eyes which spoke at once resolution and resentment, she

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addressed her astounded husband in these words :—" My lord, I am not greatly surprised at the connexions you have been pleased to form during my absence—they are entirely in conformity with your birth and breeding ; and if I did expect anything else, I heartily own my error, and that I merit, by having done so, the disappointment you had prepared for me."

" My dear Lady Ashton—my dear Eleanor," said the Lord Keeper, " listen to reason for a moment, and I will convince you I have acted with all the regard due to the dignity, as well as the interest of my family."

" To the interest of *your* family I conceive you perfectly capable of attending," returned the indignant lady, " and even to the dignity of your own family also, as far as it requires any looking after—But as mine happens to be inextricably involved with it, you will excuse me if I choose to give my own attention so far as that is concerned."

" What would you have, Lady Ashton ?" said the husband—" What is it that displeases you ? Why is it, that, on your return after so long an absence, I am arraigned in this manner ?"

" Ask your own conscience, Sir William, what has prompted you to become a renegade to your political party and opinions, and led you, for what I know, to be on the point of marrying your only daughter to a beggarly jacobite bankrupt, the inveterate enemy of your family to the boot."

" Why, what, in the name of common sense and common civility, would you have me do, madam ?" answered her husband—" Is it possible for me, with ordinary decency, to turn a young gentleman out of my house, who saved my daughter's life and my own, but the other morning as it were ?"

" Saved your life ! I have heard of that story," said the lady—" the Lord Keeper was scared by a dun cow, and he takes the young fellow who killed her for Guy of Warwick—any butcher from Haddington may soon have an equal claim on your hospitality."

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"Lady Ashton," stammered the Keeper, "this is intolerable—and when I am desirous, too, to make you easy by any sacrifice—if you would but tell me what you would be at."

"Go down to your guests," said the imperious dame, "and make your apology to Ravenswood, that the arrival of Captain Craigengelt and some other friends, renders it impossible for you to offer him lodgings at the castle—I expect young Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw."

"Good Heavens, madam!" ejaculated her husband—"Ravenswood to give place to Craigengelt, a common gambler and an informer!—it was all I could do to forbear desiring the fellow to get out of my house, and I was much surprised to see him in your ladyship's train."

"Since you saw him there, you might be well assured," answered this meek helpmate, "that he was proper society. As to this Ravenswood, he only meets with the treatment which, to my certain knowledge, he gave to a much-valued friend of mine, who had the misfortune to be his guest some time since. But take your resolution; for, if Ravenswood does not quit the house, I will."

"Sir William Ashton paced up and down the apartment in the most distressing agitation; fear, and shame, and anger, contending against the habitual deference he was in the use of rendering to his lady. At length it ended, as is usual with timid minds placed in such circumstances, in his adopting a *mezzo termine*, a middle measure.

"I tell you frankly, madam, I neither can nor will be guilty of the incivility you propose to the Master of Ravenswood—he has not deserved it at my hand. If you will be so unreasonable as to insult a man of quality under your own roof, I cannot prevent you; but I will not at least be the agent in such a preposterous proceeding."

"You will not?" asked the lady.

"No, by Heavens, madam!" her husband replied; "ask me anything congruent with common decency, as to drop his acquaintance by degrees, or the like—but to

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bid him leave my house, is what I will not, and cannot consent to."

"Then the task of supporting the honour of the family will fall on me, as it has often done before," said the lady.

She sat down, and hastily wrote a few lines. The Lord Keeper made another effort to prevent her taking a step so decisive, just as she opened the door to call her female attendant from the anteroom. "Think what you are doing, Lady Ashton—you are making a mortal enemy of a young man, who is like to have the means of harming us"——

"Did you ever know a Douglas who feared an enemy?" answered the lady contemptuously.

"Ay, but he is as proud and vindictive as an hundred Douglasses, and an hundred devils to boot. Think of it for a night only."

"Not for another moment," answered the lady;—"here, Mrs. Patullo, give this billet to young Ravenswood."

"To the Master, madam?" said Mrs. Patullo.

"Ay, to the Master, if you call him so."

"I wash my hands of it entirely," said the Keeper; "and I shall go down into the garden, and see that Jardine gathers the winter fruit for the dessert."

"Do so," said the lady, looking after him with glances of infinite contempt; "and thank God that you leave one behind you as fit to protect the honour of the family, as you are to look after pippins and pears."

The Lord Keeper remained long enough in the garden to give her ladyship's mind time to explode, and to let, as he thought, at least the first violence of Ravenswood's displeasure blow over. When he entered the hall, he found the Marquis of A—— giving orders to some of his attendants. He seemed in high displeasure, and interrupted an apology which Sir William had commenced, for having left his lordship alone.

"I presume, Sir William, you are no stranger to this singular billet with which my kinsman of Ravenswood (an emphasis on the word *my*) has been favoured by your lady—and, of course, that you are prepared to receive my

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adieus—My kinsman is already gone, having thought it unnecessary to offer any on his part, since all former civilities have been cancelled by this singular insult."

"I protest, my lord," said Sir William, holding the billet in his hand, "I am not privy to the contents of this letter. I know Lady Ashton is a warm-tempered and prejudiced woman, and I am sincerely sorry for any offence that has been given or taken; but I hope your lordship will consider that a lady"——

"Should bear herself towards persons of a certain rank with the breeding of one," said the Marquis, completing the half-uttered sentence.

"True, my lord," said the unfortunate Keeper; "but Lady Ashton is still a woman"——

"And as such, methinks," said the Marquis, again interrupting him, "should be taught the duties which correspond to her station. But here she comes, and I will learn from her own mouth the reason of this extraordinary and unexpected affront offered to my near relation, while both he and I were her ladyship's guests."

Lady Ashton accordingly entered the apartment at this moment. Her dispute with Sir William, and a subsequent interview with her daughter, had not prevented her from attending to the duties of her toilette. She appeared in full dress; and, from the character of her countenance and manner, well became the splendour with which ladies of quality then appeared on such occasions.

The Marquis of A—— bowed haughtily, and she returned the salute with equal pride and distance of demeanour. He then took from the passive hand of Sir William Ashton the billet he had given him the moment before he approached the lady, and was about to speak, when she interrupted him. "I perceive, my lord, you are about to enter upon an unpleasant subject. I am sorry any such should have occurred at this time, to interrupt, in the slightest degree, the respectful reception due to your lordship—but so it is.—Mr. Edgar Ravenswood, for whom I have addressed the billet in your lordship's hand, has abused the hospitality of this family, and Sir William Ash-

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ton's softness of temper, in order to seduce a young person into engagements without her parents' consent, and of which they never can approve."

Both gentlemen answered at once,—"My kinsman is incapable,"——said the Lord Marquis.

"I am confident that my daughter Lucy is still more incapable"——said the Lord Keeper.

Lady Ashton at once interrupted, and replied to them both.—"My Lord Marquis, your kinsman, if Mr. Ravenswood has the honour to be so, has made the attempt privately to secure the affections of this young and inexperienced girl. Sir William Ashton, your daughter has been simple enough to give more encouragement than she ought to have done to so very improper a suitor."

"And I think, madam," said the Lord Keeper, losing his accustomed temper and patience, "that if you had nothing better to tell us, you had better have kept this family secret to yourself also."

"You will pardon me, Sir William," said the lady calmly; "the noble Marquis has a right to know the cause of the treatment I have found it necessary to use to a gentleman whom he calls his blood-relation."

"It is a cause," muttered the Lord Keeper, "which has emerged since the effect has taken place; for, if it exists at all, I am sure she knew nothing of it when her letter to Ravenswood was written."

"It is the first time that I have heard of this," said the Marquis; "but since your ladyship has tabled a subject so delicate, permit me to say, that my kinsman's birth and connexions entitled him to a patient hearing, and at least a civil refusal, even in case of his being so ambitious as to raise his eyes to the daughter of Sir William Ashton."

"You will recollect, my lord, of what blood Miss Lucy Ashton is come by the mother's side," said the lady.

"I do remember your descent—from a younger branch of the house of Angus," said the Marquis—"and your ladyship—forgive me, lady—ought not to forget that the Ravenswoods have thrice intermarried with the mainstem. Come, madam—I know how matters stand—

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old and long-fostered prejudices are difficult to get over—I make every allowance for them—I ought not, and I would not otherwise have suffered my kinsman to depart alone, expelled, in a manner from this house—but I had hopes of being a mediator. I am still unwilling to leave you in anger—and shall not set forward till afternoon, as I rejoin the Master of Ravenswood upon the road a few miles from hence. Let us talk over this matter more coolly."

"It is what I anxiously desire, my lord," said Sir William Ashton, eagerly. "Lady Ashton, we will not permit my Lord of A—— to leave us in displeasure. We must compel him to tarry dinner at the castle."

"The castle," said the lady, "and all that it contains, are at the command of the Marquis, so long as he chooses to honour it with his residence; but touching the farther discussion of this disagreeable topic"——

"Pardon me, good madam," said the Marquis; "but I cannot allow you to express any hasty resolution on a subject so important. I see that more company is arriving; and since I have the good fortune to renew my former acquaintance with Lady Ashton, I hope she will give me leave to avoid perilling what I prize so highly upon any disagreeable subject of discussion—at least, till we have talked over more pleasant topics."

The lady smiled, curtsied, and gave her hand to the Marquis, by whom, with all the formal gallantry of the time, which did not permit the guest to tuck the lady of the house under the arm, as a rustic does his sweetheart at a wake, she was ushered to the eating-room.

Here they were joined by Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and other neighbours, whom the Lord Keeper had previously invited to meet the Marquis of A——. An apology, founded upon a slight indisposition, was alleged as an excuse for the absence of Miss Ashton, whose seat appeared unoccupied. The entertainment was splendid to profusion, and was protracted till a late hour

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Such was our fallen father's fate,
Yet better than mine own;
He shared his exile with his mate,
I'm banish'd forth alone.

Waller.

I WILL not attempt to describe the mixture of indignation and regret with which Ravenswood left the seat which had belonged to his ancestors. The terms in which Lady Ashton's billet was couched rendered it impossible for him, without being deficient in that spirit of which he perhaps had too much, to remain an instant longer within its walls. The Marquis, who had his share in the affront, was, nevertheless, still willing to make some efforts at conciliation. He therefore suffered his kinsman to depart alone, making him promise, however, that he would wait for him at the small inn called the Tod's-Hole, situated, as our readers may be pleased to recollect, half way betwixt Ravenswood Castle and Wolf's Crag, and about five Scottish miles distant from each. Here the Marquis proposed to join the Master of Ravenswood, either that night or the next morning. His own feelings would have induced him to have left the castle directly, but he was loath to forfeit, without at least one effort, the advantages which he had proposed from his visit to the Lord Keeper; and the Master of Ravenswood was, even in the very heat of his resentment, unwilling to foreclose any chance of reconciliation which might arise out of the partiality which Sir William Ashton had shown towards him, as well as the intercessory arguments of his noble kinsman. He himself departed without a moment's delay, farther than was necessary to make this arrangement.

At first he spurred his horse at a quick pace through an avenue of the park, as if, by rapidity of motion, he could

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stupify the confusion of feelings with which he was assailed. But as the road grew wilder and more sequestered, and when the trees had hidden the turrets of the castle, he gradually slackened his pace, as if to indulge the painful reflections which he had in vain endeavoured to repress. The path in which he found himself led him to the Mermaiden's Fountain, and to the cottage of Alice; and the fatal influence which superstitious belief attached to the former spot, as well as the admonitions which had been in vain offered to him by the inhabitant of the latter, forced themselves upon his memory. "Old saws speak truth," he said to himself; "and the Mermaiden's Well has indeed witnessed the last act of rashness of the heir of Ravenswood.—Alice spoke well," he continued, "and I am in the situation which she foretold—or rather, I am more deeply dishonoured— not the dependant and ally of the destroyer of my father's house, as the old sibyl presaged, but the degraded wretch, who has aspired to hold that subordinate character, and has been rejected with disdain."

We are bound to tell the tale as we have received it; and, considering the distance of the time, and propensity of those through whose mouths it has passed to the marvellous, this could not be called a Scottish story, unless it manifested a tinge of Scottish superstition. As Ravenswood approached the solitary fountain, he is said to have met with the following singular adventure:—His horse, which was moving slowly forward, suddenly interrupted its steady and composed pace, snorted, reared, and, though urged by the spur, refused to proceed, as if some object of terror had suddenly presented itself. On looking to the fountain, Ravenswood discerned a female figure, dressed in a white, or rather greyish mantle, placed on the very spot on which Lucy Ashton had reclined while listening to the fatal tale of love. His immediate impression was, that she had conjectured by which path he would traverse the park on his departure, and placed herself at this well-known and sequestered place of rendezvous, to indulge her own sorrow and his in a parting interview. In this

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belief he jumped from his horse, and, making its bridle fast to a tree, walked hastily towards the fountain, pronouncing eagerly, yet under his breath, the words, "Miss Ashton !—Lucy !"

The figure turned as he addressed it, and displayed to his wondering eyes, the features, not of Lucy Ashton, but of old blind Alice. The singularity of her dress, which rather resembled a shroud than the garment of a living woman—the appearance of her person, larger, as it struck him, than it usually seemed to be—above all, the strange circumstance of a blind, infirm, and decrepit person being found alone, and at a distance from her habitation, (considerable, if her infirmities be taken into account,) combined to impress him with a feeling of wonder approaching to fear. As he approached, she arose slowly from her seat, held her shrivelled hand up as if to prevent his coming more near, and her withered lips moved fast, although no sound issued from them. Ravenswood stopped ; and as, after a moment's pause, he again advanced towards her, Alice, or her apparition, moved or glided backwards towards the thicket, still keeping her face turned towards him. The trees soon hid the form from his sight ; and, yielding to the strong and terrific impression, that the being which he had seen was not of this world, the Master of Ravenswood remained rooted to the ground whereon he had stood when he caught his last view of her. At length, summoning up his courage, he advanced to the spot on which the figure had seemed to be seated ; but neither was there pressure of the grass, nor any other circumstance, to induce him to believe that what he had seen was real and substantial.

Full of those strange thoughts and confused apprehensions which awake in the bosom of one who conceives he has witnessed some preternatural appearance, the Master of Ravenswood walked back towards his horse, frequently, however, looking behind him, not without apprehension, as if expecting that the vision would re-appear. But the apparition, whether it was real, or whether it was the creation of a heated and agitated imagination, returned

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not again ; and he found his horse sweating and terrified, as if experiencing that agony of fear with which the presence of a supernatural being is supposed to agitate the brute creation. The Master mounted, and rode slowly forward, soothing his steed from time to time, while the animal seemed internally to shrink and shudder, as if expecting some new object of fear at the opening of every glade. The rider, after a moment's consideration, resolved to investigate the matter further. "Can my eyes have deceived me," he said, "and deceived me for such a space of time ?—Or are this woman's infirmities but feigned, in order to excite compassion ?—And even then, her motion resembled not that of a living and existing person. Must I adopt the popular creed, and think that the unhappy being has formed a league with the powers of darkness ?—I am determined to be resolved—I will not brook imposition even from my own eyes."

In this uncertainty he rode up to the little wicket of Alice's garden. Her seat beneath the birch-tree was vacant, though the day was pleasant, and the sun was high. He approached the hut, and heard from within the sobs and wailing of a female. No answer was returned when he knocked, so that, after a moment's pause, he lifted the latch and entered. It was indeed a house of solitude and sorrow. Stretched upon her miserable pallet lay the corpse of the last retainer of the house of Ravenswood who still abode on their paternal domains! Life had but shortly departed ; and the little girl, by whom she had been attended in her last moments, was wringing her hands and sobbing, betwixt childish fear and sorrow, over the body of her mistress.

The Master of Ravenswood had some difficulty to compose the terrors of the poor child, whom his unexpected appearance had at first rather appalled than comforted ; and when he succeeded, the first expression which the girl used intimated that "he had come too late." Upon inquiring the meaning of this expression, he learned that the deceased, upon the first attack of the mortal agony,

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had sent a peasant to the castle, to beseech an interview of the Master of Ravenswood, and had expressed the utmost impatience for his return. But the messengers of the poor are tardy and negligent: the fellow had not reached the castle, as was afterwards learned, until Ravenswood had left it, and had then found too much amusement among the retinue of the strangers to return in any haste to the cottage of Alice. Meantime, her anxiety of mind seemed to increase with the agony of her body; and, to use the phrase of Babie, her only attendant, "she prayed powerfully that she might see her master's son once more, and renew her warning." She died just as the clock in the distant village tolled one; and Ravenswood remembered, with internal shuddering, that he had heard the chime sound through the wood just before he had seen what he was now much disposed to consider as the spectre of the deceased.

It was necessary, as well from his respect to the departed as in common humanity to her terrified attendant, that he should take some measures to relieve the girl from her distressing situation. The deceased, he understood, had expressed a desire to be buried in a solitary church-yard, near the little inn of the Tod's-hole, called the Hermitage, or more commonly Armitage, in which lay interred some of the Ravenswood family, and many of their followers. Ravenswood conceived it his duty to gratify this predilection, so commonly found to exist among the Scottish peasantry, and despatched Babie to the neighbouring village, to procure the assistance of some females, assuring her that, in the meanwhile, he would himself remain with the dead body, which, as in Thessaly of old, it is accounted highly unfit to leave without a watch.

Thus, in the course of a quarter of an hour, or little more, he found himself sitting a solitary guard over the inanimate corpse of her, whose dismissed spirit, unless his eyes had strangely deceived him, had so recently manifested itself before him. Notwithstanding his natural courage, the Master was considerably affected by concurrence of circumstances so extraordinary "She

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died expressing her eager desire to see me. Can it be, then,"—was his natural course of reflection—" can strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in the hues and colouring of life ?—And why was that manifested to the eye which could not unfold its tale to the ear ?—and wherefore should a breach be made in the laws of nature, yet its purpose remain unknown ?—Vain questions, which only death, when it shall make me like the pale and withered form before me, can ever resolve."

He laid a cloth, as he spoke, over the lifeless face, upon whose features he felt unwilling any longer to dwell. He then took his place in an old carved oaken chair, ornamented with his own armorial bearings, which Alice had contrived to appropriate to her own use in the pillage which took place among creditors, officers, domestics, and messengers of the law, when his father left Ravenswood Castle for the last time. Thus seated, he banished, as much as he could, the superstitious feelings which the late incident naturally inspired. His own were sad enough, without the exaggeration of supernatural terror, since he found himself transferred from the situation of a successful lover of Lucy Ashton, and an honoured and respected friend of her father, into the melancholy and solitary guardian of the abandoned and forsaken corpse of a common pauper.

He was relieved, however, from his sad office, sooner than he could reasonably have expected, considering the distance betwixt the hut of the deceased and the village, and the age and infirmities of three old women, who came from thence, in military phrase, to relieve guard upon the body of the defunct. On any other occasion the speed of these reverend sibyls would have been much more moderate, for the first was eighty years of age and upwards, the second was paralytic, and the third lame of a leg from some accident. But the burial duties rendered to the deceased, are, to the Scottish peasant of either sex, a labour of love. I know not whether it is from the temper

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of the people, grave and enthusiastic as it certainly is, or from the recollection of the ancient catholic opinions, when the funeral rites were always considered as a period of festival to the living; but feasting, good cheer, and even inebriety, were, and are, the frequent accompaniments of a Scottish old-fashioned burial. What the funeral feast, or *dirgie*, as it is called, was to the men, the gloomy preparations of the dead body for the coffin were to the women. To straight the contorted limbs upon a board used for that melancholy purpose, to array the corpse in clean linen, and over that in its woollen shroud, were operations committed always to the old matrons of the village, and in which they found a singular and gloomy delight.

The old women paid the Master their salutations with a ghastly smile, which reminded him of the meeting betwixt Macbeth and the witches on the blasted heath of Forres. He gave them some money, and recommended to them the charge of the dead body of their contemporary, an office which they willingly undertook; intimating to him at the same time, that he must leave the hut, in order that they might begin their mournful duties. Ravenswood readily agreed to depart, only tarrying to recommend to them due attention to the body, and to receive information where he was to find the sexton, or beadle, who had in charge the deserted church-yard of the Armitage, in order to prepare matters for the reception of old Alice in the place of repose which she had selected for herself.

"Ye'll no be pinched to find out Johnie Mortsheugh," said the elder sibyl, and still her withered cheek bore a grisly smile—"he dwells near the Tod's-hole, an house of entertainment where there has been mony a blithe birling—for death and drink-draining are near neighbours to ane anither."

"Ay! and that's e'en true, cummer," said the lame hag, propping herself with a crutch, which supported the shortness of her left leg, "for I mind when the father of this Master of Ravenswood that is now standing before

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us, sticked young Blackhall with his whinger, for a wrang word said ower their wine, or brandy, or what not—he gaed in as light as a lark, and he came out with his feet foremost. I was at the winding of the corpse; and when the bluid was washed off, he was a bonnie bouk of man's body."

It may be easily believed that this ill-timed anecdote hastened the Master's purpose of quitting a company so evil-omened and so odious. Yet, while walking to the tree to which his horse was tied, and busying himself with adjusting the girths of the saddle, he could not avoid hearing, through the hedge of the little garden, a conversation respecting himself, betwixt the lame woman and the octogenarian sibyl. The pair had hobbled into the garden to gather rosemary, southernwood, rue, and other plants proper to be strewed upon the body, and burned by way of fumigation in the chimney of the cottage. The paralytic wretch, almost exhausted by the journey, was left guard upon the corpse, lest witches or fiends might play their sport with it.

The following low croaking dialogue was necessarily overheard by the Master of Ravenswood :—

"That's a fresh and full-grown hemlock, Annie Winnie—mony a cummer lang syne wad hae sought nae better horse to flee over hill and how, through mist and moonlight, and light down in the King of France's cellar."

"Ay, cummer! but the very deil has turned as hard-hearted now as the Lord Keeper, and the grit folk that hae breasts like whin-stane. They prick us and they pine us, and they pit us on the pinny-winkles for witches; and, if I say my prayers backwards ten times ower, Satan will never gie me amends o' them."

"Did ye ever see the foul thief?" asked her neighbour.

"Na!" replied the other spokeswoman; "but I trow I hae dreamed of him mony a time, and I think the day will come they will burn me for't.—But ne'er mind, cummer! we hae this dollar of the Master's, and we'll

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send doun for bread and for yill, and tobacco, and a drap orandy to burn, and a wee pickle saft sugar—and be there deil, or na deil, lass, we'll hae a merry night o't."

Here her leathern chops uttered a sort of cackling ghastly laugh, resembling, to a certain degree, the cry of the screech-owl.

"He's a frank man, and a free-handed man, the Master," said Annie Winnie, "and a comely personage —broad in the shouthers, and narrow around the lungies —he wad mak a bonnie corpse—I wad like to hae the streaking and winding o' him."

"It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie," returned the octogenarian, her companion, "that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him—dead-deal will never be laid on his back—make you your market of that, for I hae it frae a sure hand."

"Will it be his lot to die on the battle-ground, then, Ailsie Gourlay?—Will he die by the sword or the ball, as his forbears hae dune before him mony ane o' them?"

"Ask nae mair questions about it—he'll no be graced sae far," replied the sage.

"I ken ye are wiser than ither folk, Ailsie Gourlay? —But wha tell'd ye this?"

"Fashna your thumb about that, Annie Winnie," answered the sibyl—"I hae it frae a hand sure eneugh."

"But ye said ye never saw the foul thief," reiterated her inquisitive companion.

"I hae it frae as sure a hand," said Ailsie, "and frae them that spaed his fortune before the sark gaed ower his head."

"Hark! I hear his horse's feet riding aff," said the other; "they dinna sound as if good luck was wi' them."

"Mak haste, sirs," cried the paralytic hag from the cottage, "and let us do what is needfu', and say what is fitting; for, if the dead corpse binna straughted, it will girn and thraw, and that will fear the best o' us."

Ravenswood was now out of hearing. He despised most of the ordinary prejudices about witchcraft, omens, and vaticination, to which his age and country still gave

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such implicit credit, that, to express a doubt of them, was accounted a crime equal to the unbelief of Jews or Saracens; he knew also, that the prevailing belief concerning witches, operating upon the hypochondriac habits of those whom age, infirmity, and poverty, rendered liable to suspicion, and enforced by the fear of death, and the pangs of the most cruel tortures, often extorted those confessions which encumber and disgrace the criminal records of Scotland during the seventeenth century. But the vision of that morning, whether real or imaginary, had impressed his mind with a superstitious feeling, which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. The nature of the business which awaited him at the little inn, called Tod's-hole, where he soon after arrived, was not of a kind to restore his spirits.

It was necessary he should see Mortsheugh, the sexton of the old burial-ground at Armitage, to arrange matters for the funeral of Alice; and as the man dwelt near the place of her late residence, the Master, after a slight refreshment, walked towards the place where the body of Alice was to be deposited. It was situated in the nook formed by the eddying sweep of a stream, which issued from the adjoining hills. A rude cavern in an adjacent rock, which, in the interior, was cut into the shape of a cross, formed the hermitage, where some Saxon saint had in ancient times done penance, and given name to the place. The rich Abbey of Coldinghame had, in latter days, established a chapel in the neighbourhood, of which no vestige was now visible, though the church-yard which surrounded it was still, as upon the present occasion, used for the interment of particular persons. One or two shattered yew-trees still grew within the precincts of that which had once been holy ground. Warriors and barons had been buried there of old, but their names were forgotten, and their monuments demolished. The only sepulchral memorials which remained, were the upright head-stones which mark the graves of persons of inferior rank. The abode of the sexton was a solitary cottage adjacent to the ruined wall of the cemetery, but so

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low, that, with its thatch, which nearly reached the ground, covered with a thick crop of grass, fog, and house-leeks, it resembled an overgrown grave. On inquiry, however, Ravenswood found that the man of the last mattock was absent at a bridal, being fiddler as well as grave-digger to the vicinity. He therefore retired to the little inn, leaving a message that early next morning he would again call for the person, whose double occupation connected him at once with the house of mourning and the house of feasting.

An outrider of the Marquis arrived at Tod's-hole shortly after, with a message intimating that his master would join Ravenswood at that place on the following morning; and the Master, who would otherwise have proceeded to his old retreat at Wolf's Crag, remained there accordingly, to give meeting to his noble kinsman.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Hamlet. Has this fellow no feeling of his business—he sings at grave making.
Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.
Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.
Hamlet, Act. V. Scene I.

THE sleep of Ravenswood was broken by ghastly and agitating visions, and his waking intervals disturbed by melancholy reflections on the past, and painful anticipations of the future. He was perhaps the only traveller who ever slept in that miserable kennel without complaining of his lodgings, or feeling inconvenience from their deficiencies. It is when "the mind is free the body's delicate." Morning, however, found the Master an early riser, in hopes that the fresh air of the dawn might afford the refreshment which night had refused him. He took his way toward the solitary burial-ground, which lay about half a mile from the inn.

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The thin blue smoke, which already began to curl upward, and to distinguish the cottage of the living from the habitation of the dead, apprized him that its inmate had returned and was stirring. Accordingly, on entering the little church-yard, he saw the old man labouring in a half-made grave. My destiny, thought Ravenswood, seems to lead me to scenes of fate and of death; but these are childish thoughts, and they shall not master me. I will not again suffer my imagination to beguile my senses.—The old man rested on his spade as the Master approached him, as if to receive his commands, and, as he did not immediately speak, the sexton opened the discourse in his own way.

"Ye will be a wedding customer, sir, I'se warrant?"

"What makes you think so, friend?" replied the Master.

"I live by twa trades, sir," replied the blithe old man; "fiddle, sir, and spade; filling the world, and emptying of it; and I suld ken baith cast of customers by headmark in thirty years practice."

"You are mistaken, however, this morning," replied Ravenswood.

"Am I?" said the old man, looking keenly at him, "troth and it may be; since, for as brent as your brow is, there is something sitting upon it this day, that is as near akin to death as to wedlock. Weel, weel; the pick and shovel are as ready to your order as bow and fiddle."

"I wish you," said Ravenswood, "to look after the decent interment of an old woman, Alice Gray, who lived at the Craig-foot in Ravenswood Park."

"Alice Gray! blind Alice!" said the sexton; "and is she gane at last? that's another jow of the bell to bid me be ready. I mind when Habbie Gray brought her down to this land; a likely lass she was then, and looked ower her southland nose at us a'. I trow her pride got a downcome. And is she e'en gane?"

"She died yesterday," said Ravenswood; "and desired to be buried here, beside her husband; you will know where he lies, no doubt?"

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"Ken where he lies?" answered the sexton, with national indirection of response, "I ken whar a' body lies, that lies here. But ye were speaking o' her grave?—Lord help us—it's no an ordinar grave that will haud her in, if a's true that folks said of Alice in her auld days; and if I gae to six feet deep,—and a warlock's grave shouldna be an inch mair ebb, or her ain witch cummers would soon whirl her out of her shroud for a' their auld acquaintance—and be't six feet, or be't three, wha's to pay the making o't, I pray ye?"

"I will pay that, my friend, and all other reasonable charges."

"Reasonable charges?" said the sexton; "ou, there's grund-mail—and bell-siller—(though the bell's broken nae doubt),and the kist—and my day's wark—and my bit fee—and some brandy and yill to the drigie—I am no thinking that you can inter her, to ca' decently, under saxteen pund Scots."

"There is the money, my friend," said Ravenswood, "and something over. Be sure you know the grave."

"Ye'll be ane o' her English relations, I'se warrant," said the hoary man of skulls; "I hae heard she married far below her station; it was very right to let her bite on the bridle when she was living, and it's very right to gie her a decent burial now she's dead, for that's a matter o' credit to yoursell rather than to her. Folk may let their kindred shift for themsells when they are alive, and can bear the burden of their ain misdoings; but it's an unnatural thing to let them be buried like dogs, when a' the discredit gangs to the kindred—what kens the dead corpse about it?"

"You would not have people neglect their relations on a bridal occasion neither?" said Ravenswood, who was amused with the professional limitation of the grave-digger's philanthropy.

The old man cast up his sharp grey eyes with a shrewd smile, as if he understood the jest, but instantly continued with his former gravity,—"Bridals—wha wad neglect bridals, that had ony regard for plenishing the earth?

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To be sure, they suld be celebrated with all manner of good cheer, and meeting of friends, and musical instruments, harp, sackbut, and psaltery ; or gude fiddle and pipes, when these auld-warld instruments of melody are hard to be compassed."

" The presence of the fiddle, I dare say," replied Ravenswood, " would atone for the absence of all the others."

The sexton again looked sharply up at him, as he answered, " Nae doubt—nae doubt—if it were weel played ;—but yonder," he said, as if to change the discourse, " is Halbert Gray's lang hame, that ye were speering after, just the third bourock beyond the muckle throughstane that stands on sax legs yonder, abune some ane of the Ravenswoods ; for there is mony of their kin and followers here, deil lift them ! though it isna just their main burial-place."

" They are no favourites, then, of yours, these Ravenswoods?" said the Master, not much pleased with the passing benediction which was thus bestowed on his family and name.

" I kenna wha should favour them," said the gravedigger ; " when they had lands and power, they were ill guides of them baith, and, now their head's down, there's few care how lang they may be of lifting it again."

" Indeed !" said Ravenswood ; " I never heard that this unhappy family deserved ill-will at the hands of their country. I grant their poverty—if that renders them contemptible."

" It will gang a far way till't," said the sexton of Hermitage, " ye may tak my word for that—at least, I ken naething else that suld mak myself contemptible, and folk are far frae respecting me as they wad do, if I lived in a twa-lofted sclated house. But as for the Ravenswoods, I hae seen three generations of them, and deil ane to mend other."

" I thought they had enjoyed a fair character in the country," said their descendant.

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"Character! Ou, ye see, sir," said the sexton, "as for the auld gude-sire body of a lord, I lived on his land when I was a swanking young chield, and could hae blawn the trumpet wi' ony body, for I had wind eneugh then—and touching this trumpeter Marine that I have heard play afore the Lords of the Circuit, I wad hae made nae mair o' him than of a bairn and a bawbee whistle—I defy him to hae played 'Boot and saddle,' or 'Horse and away,' or 'Gallants, come trot,' with me——he hadna the tones."

"But what is all this to old Lord Ravenswood, my friend?" said the Master, who, with an anxiety not unnatural in his circumstances, was desirous of prosecuting the musician's first topic—"What had his memory to do with the degeneracy of the trumpet music?"

"Just this, sir," answered the sexton, "that I lost my wind in his service. Ye see I was trumpeter at the castle, and had allowance for blawing at break of day, and at dinner-time, and other whiles when there was company about, and it pleased my lord; and when he raised his militia to caper awa to Bothwell Brigg against the wrang-headed wastland whigs, I behoved, reason or nane, to munt a horse and caper awa wi' them."

"And very reasonable," said Ravenswood; "you were his servant and vassal."

"Servitor, say ye?" replied the sexton, "and so I was—but it was to blaw folk to their warm dinner, or at the warst to a decent kirk-yard, and no to skirl them awa' to a bluidy brae-side, where there was deil a bedral but the hooded craw. But bide ye—ye shall hear what cam o't, and how far I am bund to be bedesman to the Ravenswoods.—Till't, ye see, we gaed on a braw simmer morning, twenty-fourth of June, saxteen hundred and se'enty-nine, of a' the days of the month and year,—drums beat—guns rattled—horses kicked and trampled. Hackstoun of Rathillet keepit the brigg wi' musket and carabine and pike, sword and scythe for what I ken, and we horsemen were ordered down to cross at the ford,—I hate fords at a' times, let abe when there's thousands of

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armed men on the other side. There was auld Ravenswood brandishing his Andrew Ferrara at the head, and crying to us to come and buckle to, as if we had been gaun to a fair,—there was Caleb Balderstone, that is living yet, flourishing in the rear, and swearing Gog and Magog, he would put steel through the guts of ony man that turned bridle,—there was young Allan Ravenswood, that was then Master, wi' a bended pistol in his hand,—it was a mercy it gaed na aff,—crying to me, that had scarce as much wind left as serve the necessary purpose of my ain lungs, 'Sound, you poltroon! sound, you damned cowardly villain, or I will blow your brains out!' and, to be sure, I blew sic points of war, that the scraugh of a clockin-hen was music to them."

"Well, sir, cut all this short," said Ravenswood.

"Short!—I had like to hae been cut short mysell, in the flower of my youth, as scripture says; and that's the very thing that I compleen o'.—Weel! in to the water we behoved a' to splash, heels ower head, sit or fa'—ae horse driving on anither, as is the way of brute beasts,—and riders that hae as little sense,—the very bushes on the ither side were ableeze, wi' the flashes of the whig guns; and my horse had just ta'en the grund, when a blackavised westland carle—I wad mind the face o' him a hundred years yet,—an ee like a wild falcon's, and a beard as broad as my shovel, clapped the end o' his lang black gun within a quarter's length of my lug!—by the grace o' Mercy, the horse swarved round, and I fell aff at the tae side as the ball whistled by at the tither, and the fell auld lord took the whig such a swauk wi' his broadsword, that he made twa pieces o' his head, and down fell the lurdane wi' a' his bowk abune me."

"You were rather obliged to the old lord, I think," said Ravenswood.

"Was I? my sartie! first for bringing me into jeopardy, would I nould I—and then for whomling a chield on the tap of me, that dang the very wind out of my

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body?—I hae been short-breathed ever since, and canna gang twenty yards without peghing like a miller's aiver."

"You lost, then, your place as trumpeter?" said Ravenswood.

"Lost it? to be sure I lost it," replied the sexton, "for I couldna hae played pew upon a dry humlock;—but I might hae dune weel eneugh, for I keepit the wage and the free house, and little to do but play on the fiddle to them, but for Allan, last Lord Ravenswood, that was far waur than ever his father was."

"What," said the Master, "did my father—I mean did his father's son—this last Lord Ravenswood, deprive you of what the bounty of his father allowed you?"

"Ay, troth did he," answered the old man; "for he loot his affairs gang to the dogs, and let in this Sir William Ashton on us, that will gie naething for naething, and just removed me and a' the puir creatures that had bite and soup at the castle, and a hole to put our heads in, when things were in the auld way.

"If Lord Ravenswood protected his people, my friend, while he had the means of doing so, I think they might spare his memory," replied the Master.

"Ye are welcome to your ain opinion, sir," said the sexton; "but ye winna persuade me that he did his duty, either to himsell or to huz puir dependant creatures, in guiding us the gate he has done—he might hae gien us life-rent tacks of our bits o' houses and yards—and me, that's an auld man, living in yon miserable cabin, that's fitter for the dead than the quick, and killed wi' rheumatise, and John Smith in my dainty bit mailing, and his window glazen, and a' because Ravenswood guided his gear like a fule!"

"It is but too true," said Ravenswood, conscience-struck; "the penalties of extravagance extend far beyond the prodigal's own sufferings."

"However," said the sexton, "this young man Edgar is like to avenge my wrangs on the haill of his kindred."

"Indeed?" said Ravenswood; "why should you suppose so?"

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"They say he is about to marry the daughter of Leddy Ashton; and let her leddyship get his head ance under her oxter, and see you if she winna gie his neck a thraw. Sorra a bit, if I were him—Let her alane for hauding a' thing in het water that draws near her—sae the warst wish I shall wish the lad is, that he may take his ain creditable gate o't, and ally himsell wi' his father's enemies, that have taken his broad lands and my bonnie kail-yard from the lawful owners thereof."

Cervantes acutely remarks, that flattery is pleasing even from the mouth of a madman; and censure, as well as praise, often affects us, while we despise the opinions and motives on which it is founded and expressed. Ravenswood, abruptly reiterating his command that Alice's funeral should be attended to, flung away from the sexton, under the painful impression that the great, as well as the small vulgar, would think of his engagement with Lucy like this ignorant and selfish peasant.

"And I have stooped to subject myself to these calumnies, and am rejected notwithstanding! Lucy, your faith must be true and perfect as the diamond, to compensate for the dishonour which men's opinions, and the conduct of your mother, attach to the heir of Ravenswood!"

As he raised his eyes, he beheld the Marquis of A——, who, having arrived at the Tod's-hole, had walked forth to look for his kinsman.

After mutual greetings, he made some apology to the Master for not coming forward on the preceding evening. "It was his wish," he said, "to have done so, but he had come to the knowledge of some matters which induced him to delay his purpose. I find," he proceeded, "there has been a love affair here, kinsman; and though I might blame you for not having communicated with me, as being in some degree the chief of your family"——

"With your lordship's permission," said Ravenswood, "I am deeply grateful for the interest you are pleased to take in me—but *I* am the chief and head of my family."

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"I know it—I know it," said the Marquis; "in a strict heraldic and genealogical sense, you certainly are so—what I mean is, that being in some measure under my guardianship"——

"I must take the liberty to say, my lord," answered Ravenswood—and the tone in which he interrupted the Marquis boded no long duration to the friendship of the noble relatives, when he himself was interrupted by the little sexton, who came puffing after them, to ask if their honours would choose music at the change-house to make up for short cheer.

"We want no music," said the Master abruptly.

"Your honour disna ken what ye're refusing, then," said the fiddler, with the impertinent freedom of his profession. "I can play, 'Will't thou do't again,' and 'the Auld Man's Mear's Dead,' sax times better than ever Pattie Birnie. I'll get my fiddle in the turning of a coffin-screw."

"Take yourself away, sir," said the Marquis.

"And if your honour be a north-country gentleman," said the persevering minstrel, "whilk I wad judge from your tongue, I can play 'Ligeram Cosh,' and 'Mullin Dhu,' and 'the Cummers of Athole.'"

"Take yourself away, friend; you interrupt our conversation."

"Or if, under your honour's favour, ye should happen to be a thought honest, I can play, (this in a low and confidential tone,) 'Killicrankie,' and 'the King shall hae his ain,' and 'the Auld Stuarts back again,'—and the wife at the change-house is a decent discreet body, neither kens nor cares what toasts are drucken, and what tunes are played in her house—she's deaf to a' thing but the clink o' the siller."

The Marquis who was sometimes suspected of jacobitism, could not help laughing as he threw the fellow a dollar, and bid him go play to the servants if he had a mind, and leave them at peace.

"Aweel, gentlemen," said he, "I am wishing your honours gude day—I'll be a' the better of the dollar,

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and ye'll be the waur of wanting the music, I'se tell ye—But I'se gang hame, and finish the grave in the tuning o' a fiddle-string, lay by my spade, and then get my tother bread-winner, and awa to your folk, and see if they hae better lugs than their masters."

CHAPTER XXV.

True love, an thou be true,
Thou has ane kittle part to play;
For fortune, fashion, fancy, and thou,
Maun strive for mony a day.

I've kend by mony a friend's tale,
Far better by this heart of mine,
What time and change of fancy avail
A true-love knot to untwine.

Hendersoun.

"I WISHED to tell you, my good kinsman," said the Marquis, "now that we are quit of that impertinent fiddler, that I had tried to discuss this love affair of yours with Sir William Ashton's daughter. I never saw the young lady but for a few minutes to-day; so, being a stranger to her personal merits, I pay a compliment to you, and offer her no offence in saying you might do better."

"My lord, I am much indebted for the interest you have taken in my affairs," said Ravenswood. "I did not intend to have troubled you in any matter concerning Miss Ashton. As my engagement with that young lady has reached your lordship, I can only say, that you must necessarily suppose that I was aware of the objections to my marrying into her father's family, and of course must have been completely satisfied with the reasons by which these objections are overbalanced, since I have proceeded so far in the matter."

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"Nay, Master, if you had heard me out," said his noble relation, "you might have spared that observation; for, without questioning that you had reasons which seemed to you to counterbalance every other obstacle, I set myself, by every means that it became me to use towards the Ashtons, to persuade them to meet your views."

"I am obliged to your lordship for your unsolicited intercession," said Ravenswood; "especially as I am sure your lordship would never carry it beyond the bounds which it became me to use."

"Of that," said the Marquis, "you may be confident; I myself felt the delicacy of the matter too much to place a gentleman nearly connected with my house in a degrading or dubious situation with these Ashtons. But I pointed out all the advantages of their marrying their daughter into a house so honourable, and so nearly related with the first in Scotland; I explained the exact degree of relationship in which the Ravenswoods stand to ourselves; and I even hinted how political matters were like to turn, and what cards would be trumps next Parliament. I said I regarded you as a son—or a nephew, or so—rather than as a more distant relation; and that I made your affair entirely my own."

"And what was the issue of your lordship's explanation?" said Ravenswood, in some doubt whether he should resent or express gratitude for his interference.

"Why, the Lord Keeper would have listened to reason," said the Marquis; "he is rather unwilling to leave his place, which, in the present view of a change, must be vacated; and, to say truth, he seemed to have a liking for you, and to be sensible of the general advantages to b attained by such a match. But his lady, who is tongue of the trump, Master"——

"What of Lady Ashton, my lord?" said Ravenswood; "let me know the issue of this extraordinary conference —I can bear it."

"I am glad of that, kinsman," said the Marquis, "for I am ashamed to tell you half what she said. It is enough her mind is made up—and the mistress of a first-rate

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boarding-school could not have rejected with more haughty indifference the suit of a half-pay Irish officer, beseeching permission to wait upon the heiress of a West India planter, than Lady Ashton spurned every proposal of mediation which it could at all become me to offer in behalf of you, my good kinsman. I cannot guess what she means. A more honourable connection she could not form, that's certain. As for money and land, that used to be her husband's business rather than her's; I really think she hates you for having the rank which her husband has not, and perhaps for not having the lands that her goodman has. But I should only vex you to say more about it—here we are at the changé-house."

The Master of Ravenswood paused as he entered the cottage, which reeked through all its crevices, and they were not few, from the exertions of the Marquis's travelling-cooks, to supply goodcheer, and spread, as it were, a table in the wilderness.

My Lord Marquis," said Ravenswood, "I already mentioned that accident has put your lordship in possession of a secret, which, with my consent, should have remained one even to you, my kinsman, for some time. Since the secret was to part from my own custody, and that of the only person besides who was interested in it, I am not sorry it should have reached your lordship's ears, as being fully aware that you are my noble kinsman and friend."

"You may believe it is safely lodged with me, Master of Ravenswood," said the Marquis; "but I should like well to hear you say, that you renounced the idea of an alliance, which you can hardly pursue without a certain degree of degradation."

"Of that, my lord, I shall judge," answered Ravenswood, "and I hope with delicacy as sensitive as any of my friends. But I have no engagement with Sir William and Lady Ashton. It is with Miss Ashton alone that I have entered upon the subject, and my conduct in the matter shall be entirely ruled by her's. If she continues to prefer me in my poverty to the wealthier suitors whom her friends recommend, I may well make some

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sacrifice to her sincere affection—I may well surrender to her the less tangible and less palpable advantages of birth, and the deep-rooted prejudices of family hatred. If Miss Lucy Ashton should change her mind on a subject of such delicacy, I trust my friends will be silent on my disappointment, and I shall know how to make my enemies so."

"Spoke like a gallant young nobleman," said the Marquis; "for my part I have that regard for you, that I should be sorry the thing went on. This Sir William Ashton was a pretty enough pettyfogging kind of a lawyer twenty years ago, and betwixt battling at the bar, and leading in committees of Parliament, he has got well on —the Darien matter lent him a lift, for he had good intelligence and sound views, and sold out in time—but the best work is had out of him. No government will take him at his own, or rather his wife's extravagant valuation; and betwixt his indecision and her insolence, from all I can guess, he will outsit his market, and be had cheap when no one will bid for him. I say nothing of Miss Ashton; but I assure you, a connection with her father will be neither useful nor ornamental, beyond that part of your father's spoils which he may be prevailed upon to disgorge by way of tocher good—and take my word for it, you will get more if you have spirit to bell the cat with him in the House of Peers.—And I will be the man, cousin," continued his lordship, "will course the fox for you, and make him rue the day that ever he refused a composition too honourable for him, and proposed by me on the behalf of a kinsman."

There was something in all this, that, as it were, overshot the mark. Ravenswood could not disguise from himself that his noble kinsman had more reasons for taking offence at the reception of his suit, than regarded his interest and honour, yet he could neither complain nor be surprised that it should be so. He contented himself therefore with repeating that his attachment was to Miss Ashton personally; that he desired neither wealth nor

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aggrandizement from her father's means and influence, and that nothing should prevent his keeping his engagement, except her own express desire that it should be relinquished—and he requested as a favour that the matter might be no more mentioned betwixt them at present, assuring the Marquis of A—— that he should be his confidant in its progress or its interruption.

The Marquis soon had more agreeable, as well as more interesting subjects on which to converse. A foot post, who had followed him from Edinburgh to Ravenswood Castle, and had traced his steps to the Tod's-hole, brought him a packet laden with good news. The political calculations of the Marquis had proved just, both in London and at Edinburgh, and he saw almost within his grasp, the preeminence for which he had panted.—The refreshments which the servants had prepared, were now put on the table, and an epicure would perhaps have enjoyed them with additional zest, from the contrast which such fare afforded to the miserable cabin in which it was served up.

The turn of conversation corresponded with and added to the social feelings of the company. The Marquis expanded with pleasure on the power which probable incidents were likely to assign to him, and on the use which he hoped to make of it in serving his kinsman Ravenswood. Ravenswood could but repeat the gratitude which he really felt, even when he considered the topic as too long dwelt upon. The wine was excellent, notwithstanding its having been brought in a runlet from Edinburgh; and the habits of the Marquis, when engaged with such good cheer, were somewhat sedentary. And so it fell out that they delayed their journey two hours later than was their original purpose.

"But what of that, my good young friend?" said the Marquis; "your Castle of Wolf's Crag is but five or six miles distance, and will afford the same hospitality to your kinsman of A——, that it gave to this same Sir William Ashton."

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"Sir William took the castle by storm," said Ravenswood, "and, like many a victor, had little reason to congratulate himself on his conquest."

"Well, well!" said Lord A——, whose dignity was something relaxed by the wine he had drunk,—"I see I must bribe you to harbour me—come, pledge me in a bumper health to the last young lady that slept at Wolf's Crag, and liked her quarters.—My bones are not so tender as hers, and I am resolved to occupy her apartment to-night, that I may judge how hard the couch is that love can soften."

"Your lordship may choose what penance you please," said Ravenswood, "but I assure you, I should expect my old servant to hang himself, or throw himself from the battlements, should your lordship visit him so unexpectedly—I do assure you, we are totally and literally unprovided."

But his declaration only brought from his noble patron an assurance of his own total indifference as to every species of accommodation, and his determination to see the tower of Wolf's Crag. His ancestor, he said, had been feasted there, when he went forward with the then Lord Ravenswood to the fatal battle of Flodden, in which they both fell. Thus hard pressed, the Master offered to ride forward to get matters put in such preparation as time and circumstances admitted; but the Marquis protested, his kinsman must afford him his company, and would only consent that an avant-courier should carry to the destined Seneschal, Caleb Balderstone, the unexpected news of this invasion.

The Master of Ravenswood soon after accompanied the Marquis in his carriage, as the latter had proposed; and when they became better acquainted in the progress of the journey, his noble relation explained the very liberal views which he entertained for his relation's preferment, in case of the success of his own political schemes. They related to a secret and highly important commission beyond sea, which could only be intrusted to a person of rank, talent, and perfect confidence, and which, as it

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required great trust and reliance on the envoy employed, could not but prove both honourable and advantageous to him. We need not enter into the nature and purpose of this commission, farther than to acquaint our readers that the charge was in prospect highly acceptable to the Master of Ravenswood, who hailed with pleasure the hope of emerging from his present state of indigence and inaction, into independence and honourable exertion.

While he listened thus eagerly to the details with which the Marquis now thought it necessary to intrust him, the messenger who had been despatched to the Tower of Wolf's Crag, returned with Caleb Balderstone's humble duty, and an assurance that "a' should be in seemly order, sic as the hurry of time permitted, to receive their lordships as it behoved."

Ravenswood was too well accustomed to his Seneschal's mode of acting and speaking, to hope much from this confident assurance. He knew that Caleb acted upon the principle of the Spanish generals, in the campaign of ——, who, much to the perplexity of the Prince of Orange, their commander-in-chief, used to report their troops as full in number, and possessed of all necessary points of equipment, not considering it consistent with their dignity, or the honour of Spain, to confess any deficiency either in men or munition, until the want of both was unavoidably discovered in the day of battle. Accordingly, Ravenswood thought it necessary to give the Marquis some hint, that the fair assurance which they had just received from Caleb, did not by any means ensure them against a very indifferent reception.

"You do yourself injustice, Master," said the Marquis, "or you wish to surprise me agreeably. From this window I see a great light in the direction, where, if I remember aright, Wolf's Crag lies; and, to judge from the splendour which the old tower sheds around it, the preparations for our reception must be of no ordinary description. I remember your father putting the same deception on me, when we went to the tower for a few days hawking, about twenty years since, and yet we spent our

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time as jollily at Wolf's Crag as we could have done at my own hunting seat at B——."

"Your lordship, I fear, will experience that the faculty of the present proprietor to entertain his friends is greatly abridged," said Ravenswood; "the will, I need hardly say, remains the same. But I am as much at a loss as your lordship to account for so strong and brilliant a light as is now above Wolf's Crag,—the windows of the tower are few and narrow, and those of the lower story are hidden from us by the walls of the court. I cannot conceive that any illumination of an ordinary nature could afford such a blaze of light."

The mystery was soon explained; for the cavalcade almost instantly halted, and the voice of Caleb Balderstone was heard at the coach window, exclaiming, in accents broken by grief and fear, "Och, gentlemen—Och, my gude lords—Och, haud to the right!—Wolf's Crag is burning, bower and ha'—a' the rich plenishing outside and inside—a' the fine graith, pictures, tapestries, needlewark, hangings, and other decorements—a' in a bleeze, as if they were nae mair than sae mony peats, or as muckle pease-strae! Haud to the right, gentlemen, I implore ye—there is some sma' provision making at Lucky Sma'trash's—but O, wae for this night, and wae for me that lives to see it!"

Ravenswood was at first stunned by this new and unexpected calamity; but, after a moment's recollection, he sprang from the carriage, and hastily bidding his noble kinsman good-night, was about to ascend the hill towards the castle, the broad and full conflagration of which now flung forth a high column of red light, that flickered far o seaward upon the dashing waves of the ocean.

"Take a horse, Master," exclaimed the Marquis, greatly affected by this additional misfortune, so unexpectedly heaped upon his young protegée; "and give me my ambling palfrey;—and haste forward, you knaves, to see what can be done to save the furniture, or to extinguish the fire—ride, you knaves, for your lives!"

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The attendants bustled together, and began to strike their horses with the spur, and called upon Caleb to show them the road. But the voice of that careful Seneschal was heard above the tumult, "O stop—sirs, stop—turn bridle, for the luve of mercy—add not loss of lives to the loss of warld's gear!—Thirty barrels of powther landed out of a Dunkirk dogger in the auld Lord's time—a' in the vau'ts of the auld tower,—the fire canna be far aff it, I trow—Lord's sake, to the right, lads—to the right—let's pit the hill atween us and peril,—a wap wi' a corner-stane o' Wolf's Crag wad defy the doctor!"

It will readily be supposed that this annunciation hurried the Marquis and his attendants into the route which Caleb prescribed, dragging Ravenswood along with them, although there was much in the matter which he could not comprehend. "Gunpowder!" he exclaimed, laying hold of Caleb, who in vain endeavoured to escape from him, "what gunpowder? How any quantity of powder could be in Wolf's Crag without my knowledge, I cannot possibly comprehend."

"But I can," interrupted the Marquis, whispering him, "I can comprehend it thoroughly—for God's sake, ask him no more questions at present."

"There it is, now," said Caleb, extricating himself from his master, and adjusting his dress, "your honour will believe his lordship's honourable testimony—His lordship minds weel, how, in the year that him they ca'd King Willie died"——

"Hush! hush, my good friend!" said the Marquis; "I shall satisfy your master upon that subject."

"And the people at Wolf's-hope"—said Ravenswood, "did none of them come to your assistance before the flame got so high?"

"Ay did they, mony ane o' them, the rapscallions!" said Caleb; "but truly I was in nae hurry to let them into the tower, where there were so much plate and valuables."

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"Confound you for an impudent liar!" said Ravenswood, in uncontrollable ire, "there was not a single ounce of"——

"Forby," said the butler, most irreverently raising his voice to a pitch which drowned his master's, "the fire made fast on us, owing to the store of tapestry and carved timmer in the banquetting ha', and the loons ran like scauded rats sae soon as they heard of the gunpouther."

"I do entreat," said the Marquis to Ravenswood, "you will ask him no more questions."

"Only one, my lord—What has become of poor Mysie?"

"Mysie?" said Caleb, "I had nae time to look about ony Mysie—she's in the tower, I'se warrant, biding her awful doom."

"By heaven!" said Ravenswood, "I do not understand all this! the life of a faithful old creature is at stake—my lord, I will be withheld no longer—I will at least ride up, and see whether the danger is as imminent as this old fool pretends."

"Weel, then, as I live by bread," said Caleb, "Mysie is weel and safe. I saw her out of the castle before I left it mysell—Was I ganging to forget an auld fellow-servant?"

"What made you tell me the contrary this moment?" said his master.

"Did I tell you the contrary?" said Caleb; "then I maun hae been dreaming surely, or this awsome night has turned my judgment—but safe she is, and ne'er a living soul in the castle, a' the better for them—they wad have gotten an unco heezy."

The Master of Ravenswood, upon this assurance being solemnly reiterated, and notwithstanding his extreme wish to witness the last explosion, which was to ruin to the ground the mansion of his fathers, suffered himself to be dragged onward towards the village of Wolf's-hope, where not only the change-house, but that of our well-known friend the cooper, were all prepared for reception

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of himself and his noble guest, with a liberality of provision which requires some explanation.

We omitted to mention in its place, that Lockhard having fished out the truth concerning the mode by which Caleb had obtained the supplies for his banquet, the Lord Keeper, amused with the incident, and desirous at the time to gratify Ravenswood, had recommended the cooper of Wolf's-hope to the official situation under government, the prospect of which had reconciled him to the loss of his wild-fowl. Mr. Girder's preferment had occasioned a pleasing surprise to old Caleb; for when, some days after his master's departure, he found himself absolutely compelled, by some necessary business, to visit the fishing hamlet, and was gliding like a ghost past the door of the cooper, for fear of being summoned to give some account of the progress of the solicitation in his favour, or, more probably, that the inmates might upbraid him with the false hope he had held out upon the subject, he heard himself, not without some apprehension, summoned at once in treble, tenor, and bass,—a trio performed by the voices of Mrs. Girder, old Dame Loup-the-dyke, and the goodman of the dwelling—"Mr. Caleb—Mr. Caleb—Mr. Caleb Balderstone! I hope ye arena ganging dry-lipped by our door, and we sae muckle indebted to you?"

This might be said ironically as well as in earnest. Caleb augured the worst, turned a deaf ear to the trio aforesaid, and was moving doggedly on, his ancient castor pulled over his brows, and his eyes bent on the ground, as if to count the flinty pebbles with which the rude pathway was causewayed. But on a sudden he found himself surrounded in his progress, like a stately merchantman in the Gut of Gibraltar, (I hope the ladies will excuse the tarpaulin phrase,) by three Algerine gallies.

"Gude guide us, Mr. Balderstone!" said Mrs. Girder.

"Wha wad hae thought it of an auld and kend friend!" said the mother.

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"And no sae muckle as stay to receive our thanks," said the cooper himself, "and frae the like o' me that seldom offers them! I am sure I hope there's nae ill seed sawn between us, Mr. Balderstone—Ony man that has said to ye, I am no gratefu' for the situation of Queen's cooper, let me hae a whample at him wi' mine eatche*—that's a'."

"My good friends—my dear friends," said Caleb, still doubting how the certainty of the matter might stand, "what needs a' this ceremony?—ane tries to serve their friends, and sometimes they may happen to prosper, and sometimes to misgie—naething I care to be fashed wi' less than thanks—I never could bide them."

"Faith, Mr. Balderstone, ye suld hae been fashed wi' few o' mine," said the downright man of staves and hoops, "if I had only your gude-will to thank ye for—I suld e'en hae set the guse, and the wild-deukes, and the runlet of sack, to balance that account. Gude-will, man, is a geizen'd tub, that hauds in nae liquor—but gude deed's like the cask, tight, round, and sound, that will haud liquor for the King."

"Have ye no heard of our letter," said the mother-in-law, "making our John the Queen's cooper for certain?—and scarce a chield that had ever hammered gird upon tub but was applying for it?"

"Have I heard!!!" said Caleb, (who now found how the wind set,) with an accent of exceeding contempt at the doubt expressed—"Have I heard, quo' she!!!"—and as he spoke, he changed his shambling, skulking, dodging pace, into a manly and authoritative step, re-adjusted his cocked hat, and suffered his brow to emerge from under it in all the pride of aristocracy, like the sun from behind a cloud.

"To be sure, he canna but hae heard," said the good woman.

"Ay, to be sure it's impossible but I should," said Caleb; "and sae I'll be the first to kiss ye, joe, and

* *Anglicè*, adze.

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wish you, cooper, much joy of your preferment, naething doubting but ye ken wha are your friends, and have helped ye, and can help ye. I thought it right to look a wee strange upon it at first," added Caleb, "just to see if ye were made of the right mettle—but ye ring true, lad, ye ring true!"

So saying, with a most lordly air he kissed the women, and abandoned his hand, with an air of serene patronage to the hearty shake of Mr. Girder's horn-hard palm. Upon this complete, and to Caleb most satisfactory information, he did not, it may readily be believed, hesitate to accept an invitation to a solemn feast, to which were invited, not only all the *notables* of the village, but even his ancient antagonist, Mr. Dingwall himself. At this festivity he was, of course, the most welcome and most honoured guest; and so well did he ply the company with stories of what he could do with his master, his master with the Lord Keeper, the Lord Keeper with the Council, and the Council with the King, that, before the company dismissed, (which was, indeed, rather at an early hour than a late one,) every man of note in the village was ascending to the top-gallant of some ideal preferment by the ladder of ropes which Caleb had presented to their imagination. Nay, the cunning butler regained in that moment, not only all the influence he possessed formerly over the villagers, when the baronial family which he served were at the proudest, but acquired even an accession of importance. The writer—the very attorney himself—such is the thirst of preferment—felt the force of the attraction, and, taking an opportunity to draw Caleb into a corner, spoke, with affectionate regret, of the declining health of the sheriff-clerk of the county.

"An excellent man—a most valuable man, Mr. Caleb—but fat sall I say!—we are peer feckless bodies—here the day, and awa by cock-screech the morn—and if he failzies, there maun be somebody in his place—and gif that ye could airt it my way, I sall be thankful, man—a

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gluve stuffed wi' gowd nobles—an' hark ye, man, something canny till yoursell—and the Wolf's-hope carles to settle kindly wi' the Master of Ravenswood—that is, Lord Ravenswood—God bless his lordship!"

A smile, and a hearty squeeze by the hand, was the suitable answer to this overture—and Caleb made his escape from the jovial party, in order to avoid committing himself by any special promises.

"The Lord be gude to me," said Caleb, when he found himself in the open air, and at liberty to give vent to the self-exultation with which he was, as it were, distended; "did ever ony man see sic a set of green-gaislings!—the very pick-maws and solan-geese out by yonder at the Bass hae ten times their sense—God, an I had been the Lord High Commissioner to the Estates o' Parliament, they couldna hae beflumm'd me mair—and, to speak Heaven's truth, I could hardly hae beflumm'd them better neither. But the writer—ha! ha! ha!—Ah, ha! ha! ha! mercy on me, that I suld live in my auld days to gie the gang-by to the very writer!—Sheriff-clerk!!!—But I hae an auld account to settle wi' the carle; and to make amends for by-ganes, the office shall just cost him as much time-serving and tide-serving, as if he were to get it in gude earnest—of whilk there is sma' appearance, unless the Master learns mair the ways of this warld, whilk it is muckle to be doubted that he never will do."

CHAPTER XXVI.

> Why flames yon far summit—why shoot to the blast
> Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast?—
> 'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven
> From thine eyry, that beacons the darkness of Heaven.
>
> *Campbell.*

THE circumstances announced in the conclusion of the last chapter, will account for the ready and cheerful re

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ception of the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood in the village of Wolf's-hope. In fact, Caleb had no sooner announced the conflagration of the tower, than the whole hamlet were upon foot to hasten to extinguish the flames. And although that zealous adherent diverted their zeal by intimating the formidable contents of the subterranean apartments, yet the check only turned their assiduity into another direction. Never had there been such slaughtering of capons, and fat geese, and barn-door fowls,—never such boiling of *reested* hams,—never such making of car-cakes and sweet scones, Selkirk bannocks, cookies, and petticoat-tails,—delicacies little known to the present generation. Never had there been such a tapping of barrels, and such uncorking of grey-beards, in the village of Wolf's-hope. All the inferior houses were thrown open for the reception of the Marquis's dependants, who came, it was thought, as precursors of the shower of preferment, which hereafter was to leave the rest of Scotland dry, in order to distil its rich dews on the village of Wolf's-hope under Lammermoor. The minister put in his claim to have the guests of distinction lodged at the Manse, having his eye, it was thought, upon a neighbouring preferment, where the incumbent was sickly; but Mr. Balderstone destined that honour to the cooper, his wife, and wife's mother, who danced for joy at the preference thus assigned them.

Many a beck and many a bow welcomed these noble guests to as good entertainment as persons of such rank could set before such visiters; and the old dame, who had formerly lived in Ravenswood Castle, and knew, as she said, the ways of the nobility, was in no whit wanting in arranging matters, as well as circumstances permitted, according to the etiquette of the times. The cooper's house was so roomy, that each guest had his separate retiring-room, to which they were ushered with all due ceremony, while the plentiful supper was in the act of being placed upon the table.

Ravenswood no sooner found himself alone, than, impelled by a thousand feelings, he left the apartment, the

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house, and the village, and hastily retraced his steps to the brow of the hill, which rose betwixt the village, and screened it from the tower, in order to view the final fall of the house of his fathers. Some idle boys from the hamlet had taken the same direction out of curiosity, having first witnessed the arrival of the coach-and-six and its attendants. As they ran one by one past the Master, calling to each other to "come and see the auld tower blaw up in the lift like the peelings of an ingan," he could not but feel himself moved with indignation. "And these are the sons of my father's vassals," he said—"of men bound, both by law and gratitude, to follow our steps through battle, and fire and flood; and now the destruction of their liege-lord's house is but a holiday's sight to them!"

These exasperating reflections were partly expressed in the acrimony with which he exclaimed, on feeling himself pulled by the cloak,—"What do you want, you dog?"

"I am a dog, and an auld dog too," answered Caleb, for it was he who had taken the freedom; "and I am like to get a dog's wages—but it does not signification a pinch of sneeshing, for I am ower auld a dog to learn new tricks, or to follow a new master."

As he spoke, Ravenswood attained the ridge of the hill from which Wolf's Crag was visible; the flames had entirely sunk down, and, to his great surprise, there was only a dusky reddening upon the clouds immediately over the castle, which seemed the reflection of the embers of the sunken fire."

"The place cannot have blown up," said the Master; "we must have heard the report—if a quarter of the gunpowder was there you tell me of, it would have been heard twenty miles off."

"It's very like it wad," said Balderstone, composedly.

"Then the fire cannot have reached the vaults?"

"It's like no," answered Caleb, with the same impenetrable gravity.

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"Hark ye, Caleb," said his master, "this grows a little too much for my patience. I must go and examine how matters stand at Wolf's Crag myself."

"Your honour is ganging to gang nae sic gate," said Caleb, firmly.

"And why not?" said Ravenswood, sharply; "who or what shall prevent me?"

"Even I mysell," said Caleb, with the same determination.

"You, Balderstone!" replied the Master; "you are forgetting yourself, I think."

"But I think no," said Balderstone; "for I can just tell ye a' about the castle on this knowe-head as well as if ye were at it. Only dinna pit yoursell into a kippage, and expose yoursell before the weans, or before the Marquis, when ye gang down-by."

"Speak out, you old fool," replied his master, "and let me know the best and the worst at once."

"Ou, the best and the warst is just that the tower is standing haill and feir, as safe and as empty as when ye left it."

"Indeed!—and the fire?" said Ravenswood.

"Not a gleed of fire, then, except the bit kindling peat, and maybe a spunk in Mysie's cutty-pipe," replied Caleb.

"But the flame?" demanded Ravenswood; "the broad blaze, which might have been seen ten miles off—what occasioned that?"

"Hout awa! it's an auld saying and a true,—

> Little's the light
> Will be seen far in a mirk night.

A wheen fern and horse litter that I fired in the courtyard, after sending back the loon of a footman; and, to speak Heaven's truth, the next time that ye send or bring ony body here, let them be gentles allenarly, without ony fremd servants, like that chield Lockhard, to be gledging and gleeing about, and looking upon the wrang side of ane's housekeeping, to the discredit of the family, and

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forcing ane to damn their souls wi' telling ae ee after another faster than I can count them—I wad rather set fire to the tower in gude earnest, and burn it ower my ain head into the bargain, or I see the family dishonoured in the sort."

"Upon my word, I am infinitely obliged by the proposal, Caleb," said his master, scarce able to restrain his laughter, though rather angry at the same time. "But the gunpowder?—is there such a thing in the tower?—the Marquis seemed to know of it."

"The pouther—ha! ha! ha!—the Marquis—ha! ha! ha!" replied Caleb; "if your honour were to brain me, I behooved to laugh—the Marquis—the pouther!—was it there? ay, it was there. Did he ken o't?—my certie! the Marquis kend o't, and it was the best o' the game; for, when I couldna pacify your honour wi' a' that I could say, I aye threw out a word mair about the gunpouther, and garr'd the Marquis tak the joo in his ain hand.

"But you have not answered my question," said the Master, impatiently; "how came the powder there, and where is it now?"

"Ou, it cam there, an ye maun needs ken," said Caleb, looking mysteriously, and whispering, "when there was like to be a wee bit rising here; and the Marquis, and a' the great lords of the north, were a' in it, and mony a gudely gun and broad-sword were ferried ower frae Dunkirk forby the pouther—awfu' wark we had getting them into the tower under cloud o' night, for ye maun think it wasna every body could be trusted wi' sic kittle jobs—But if ye will gae hame to your supper, I will tell you a' about it as ye gang down."

"And these wretched boys," said Ravenswood, "is it your pleasure they are to sit there all night, to wait for the blowing up of a tower that is not even on fire?"

"Surely not, if it is your honour's pleasure that they suld gang hame; although," added Caleb, "it wadna do them a grain's damage—they wad screigh less the next day, and sleep the sounder at e'en—But just as your honour likes."

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Stepping accordingly towards the urchins who manned the knolls near which they stood, Caleb informed them, in an authoritative tone, that their Honours Lord Ravenswood and the Marquis of A—— had given orders that the tower was not to blow up till next day at noon. The boys dispersed upon this comfortable assurance. One or two, however, followed Caleb for more information, particularly the urchin whom he had cheated while officiating as turnspit, who screamed, "Mr. Balderstone! Mr. Balderstone! than the castle's gane out like an auld wife's spunk?"

"To be sure it is, callant," said the butler; "do ye think the castle of as great a lord as Lord Ravenswood wad continue in a bleeze, and him standing looking on wi' his ain very een?—It's aye right," continued Caleb, shaking off his ragged page, and closing in to his master, "to train up weans, as the wise man says, in the way they should go, and, aboon a', to teach them respect to their superiors."

"But all this while, Caleb, you have never told me what became of the arms and powder," said Ravenswood.

"Why, as for the arms," said Caleb, "it was just like the bairns' rhyme—

'Some gaed east, and some gaed west,
And some gaed to the craw's nest:'

And for the pouther, I e'en changed it, as occasion served, with the skippers o' Dutch luggers and French vessels, for gin and brandy, and it served the house mony a year—a gude swap too, between what cheereth the soul of man and that which dingeth it clean out of his body; forby, I keepit a wheen pounds of it for yoursell, when ye wanted to take the pleasure o' shooting—whiles, in these latter days, I wad hardly hae kend else whar to get pouther for your pleasure. And now that your anger is ower, sir, wasna that weel managed o' me, and arena ye far better sorted doun yonder than ye could hae been in your ain auld ruins upby yonder, as the case stands wi' us now?—the mair's the pity."

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"I believe you may be right, Caleb; but, before burning down my castle, either in jest or in earnest," said Ravenswood, "I think I had a right to be in the secret."

"Fie for shame, your honour!" replied Caleb; "it fits an auld carle like me weel eneugh to tell lees for the credit of the family, but it wadna beseem the like o' your honour's sell; besides, young folk are no judicious—they canna make the maist of a bit figment. Now this fire—for a fire it sall be, if I suld burn the auld stable to make it mair feasible—this fire, besides that it will be an excuse for asking ony thing we want through the country, or doun at the haven—this fire will settle mony things on an honourable footing for the family's credit, that cost me telling twenty daily lees to a wheen idle chaps and queans, and, what's waur, without gaining credence."

"That was hard indeed, Caleb; but I do not see how this fire should help your veracity or your credit."

"There it is now!" said Caleb; "wasna I saying that young folk had a green judgment?—How suld it help me, quotha?—it will be a creditable apology for the honour of the family for this score of years to come, if it is weel guided. Where's the family pictures? says ae meddling body—the great fire at Wolf's Crag, answers I. Where's the family plate? says another—the great fire, says I; wha was to think of plate when life and limb were in danger?—Where's the wardrobe and the linens?—where's the tapestries and the decorements?—beds of state, twilts, pands and testors, napery and broidered wark?—The fire—the fire—the fire. Guide the fire weel, and it will serve ye for a' that ye suld have and have not—and, in some sort, a gude excuse is better than the things themselves; for they maun crack and wear out, and be consumed by time, whereas a gude offcome, prudently and creditably handled, may serve a nobleman and his family, Lord kens how lang!"

Ravenswood was too well acquainted with his butler's pertinacity and self-opinion, to dispute the point with him any farther. Leaving Caleb, therefore, to the enjoyment of his own successful ingenuity, he returned to the ham

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let, where he found the Marquis and the good women of the mansion under some anxiety—the former on account of his absence, the others for the discredit their cookery might sustain by the delay of the supper. All were now at ease, and heard with pleasure that the fire at the castle had burned out of itself, without reaching the vaults, which was the only information that Ravenswood thought it proper to give in public concerning the event of his butler's stratagem.

They sat down to an excellent supper. No invitation could prevail on Mr. and Mrs. Girder, even in their own house, to sit down at table with guests of such high quality. They remained standing in the apartment, and acted the part of respectful and careful attendants on the company. Such were the manners of the time. The elder dame, confident through her age and connection with the Ravenswood family, was less scrupulously ceremonious. She played a mixed part betwixt that of the hostess of an inn, and the mistress of a private house, who receives guests above her own degree. She recommended, and even pressed what she thought best, and was herself easily entreated to take a moderate share of the good cheer, in order to encourage her guests by her own example. Often she interrupted herself, to express her regret that "my Lord did not eat—that the Master was pyking a bare bane—that, to be sure, there was naething there fit to set before their honours—that Lord Allan, rest his saul, used to like a pouthered guse, and said it was Latin for a tass o' brandy—that the brandy came frae France direct; for, for a' the English laws and gaugers, the Wolf's-hope brigs hadna forgotten the gate to Dunkirk."

Here the cooper admonished his mother-in-law with his elbow, which procured him the following special notice in the progress of her speech.

"Ye needna be dunshin that gate, John," continued the old lady; "naebody says that *ye* ken whar the brandy comes frae; and it wadna be fitting ye should, and you the Queen's cooper; and what signifies't," continued she,

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addressing Lord Ravenswood, "to king, queen, or keiser, whar an auld wife like me buys her pickle sneeshin, or her drap brandy-wine, to haud her heart up ?"

Having thus extricated herself from her supposed false step, Dame Loup-the-dyke proceeded, during the rest of the evening, to supply, with great animation, and very little assistance from her guests, the funds necessary for the support of the conversation, until, declining any farther circulation of their glass, her guests requested her permission to retire to their apartments.

The Marquis occupied the chamber of dais, which, in every house above the rank of a mere cottage, was kept sacred for such high occasions as the present. The modern finishing with plaister was then unknown, and tapestry was confined to the houses of the nobility and superior gentry. The cooper, therefore, who was a man of some vanity, as well as some wealth, had imitated the fashion observed by the inferior land-holders and clergy, who usually ornamented their state apartments with hangings of a sort of stamped leather, manufactured in the Netherlands, garnished with trees and animals executed in copper foil, and with many a pithy sentence of morality, which, although couched in Low Dutch, were perhaps as much attended to in practice as if written in broad Scotch. The whole had somewhat of a gloomy aspect ; but, the fire, composed of old pitch-barrel staves, blazed merrily up the chimney ; the bed was decorated with linen of most fresh and dazzling whiteness, which had never before been used, and might, perhaps, have never been used at all, but for this high occasion. On the toilette beside, stood an old-fashioned mirror, in a filagree frame, part of the dispersed finery of the neighbouring castle. It was flanked by a long-necked bottle of Florence wine, by which stood a glass nearly as tall, resembling in shape that which Teniers usually places in the hands of his own portrait, when he paints himself as mingling in the revels of a country village. To counterbalance those foreign sentinels, there mounted guard on the other side of the mirror two stout warders of Scottish lineage ; a jug, namely, of

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double ale, which held a Scotch pint, and a quegh or bicker of ivory and ebony, hooped with silver, the work of John Girder's own hands, and the pride of his heart. Besides these preparations against thirst, there was a goodly diet-loaf, or sweet-cake; so that, with such auxiliaries, the apartment seemed victualled against a siege of two or three days.

It only remains to say, that the Marquis's valet was in attendance, displaying his master's brocaded night-gown, and richly embroidered velvet cap, lined and faced with Brussels lace, upon a huge leathern easy-chair, wheeled round so as to have the full advantage of the comfortable fire which we have already mentioned. We therefore commit that eminent person to his night's repose, trusting he profited by the ample preparations made for his accommodation,—preparations which we have mentioned in detail, as illustrative of ancient Scottish manners.

It is not necessary we should be equally minute in describing the sleeping apartment of the Master of Ravenswood, which was that usually occupied by the goodman and goodwife themselves. It was comfortably hung with a sort of warm coloured worsted, manufactured in Scotland, approaching in texture to what is now called shaloon. A staring picture of John Girder himself ornamented this dormitory, painted by a starving Frenchman, who had, God knows how or why, strolled over from Flushing or Dunkirk to Wolf's-hope in a smuggling dogger. The features were, indeed, those of the stubborn, opinionative, yet sensible artizan, but Monsieur had contrived to throw a French grace into the look and manner, so utterly inconsistent with the dogged gravity of the original, that it was impossible to look at it without laughing. John and his family, however, piqued themselves not a little upon this picture, and were proportionably censured by the neighbourhood, who pronounced that the cooper, in sitting for the same, and yet more in presuming to hang it up in his bed-chamber, had exceeded his privilege as the richest man of the village; at once stept beyond the bounds of his own rank, and encroached upon those of

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the superior orders; and, in fine, had been guilty of a very overweening act of vanity and presumption. Respect for the memory of my deceased friend, Mr. Richard Tinto, has obliged me to treat this matter at some length; but I spare the reader his prolix, though curious observations, as well upon the character of the French school, as upon the state of painting in Scotland, at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The other preparations of the Master's sleeping apartment, were similar to those in the chamber of dais.

At the usual early hour of that period, the Marquis of A—— and his kinsman prepared to resume their journey. This could not be done without an ample breakfast, in which cold meat and hot meat, and oatmeal flummery, wine and spirits, and milk varied by every possible mode of preparation, evinced the same desire to do honour to their guests, which had been shown by the hospitable owners of the mansion upon the evening before. All the bustle of preparation for departure now resounded through Wolf's-hope. There was paying of bills and shaking of hands, and saddling of horses, and harnessing of carriages, and distributing of drink-money. The Marquis left a broad piece for the gratification of John Girder's household, which he, the said John, was for some time disposed to convert to his own use; Dingwall the writer assuring him he was justified in so doing, seeing he was the disburser of those expenses which were the occasion of the gratification. But, notwithstanding this legal authority, John could not find in his heart to dim the splendour of his late hospitality, by pocketting anything in the nature of a gratuity. He only assured his menials he would consider them as a damned ungrateful pack, if they bought a gill of brandy elsewhere than out of his own stores; and as the drink-money was likely to go to its legitimate use, he comforted himself that, in this manner, the Marquis's donative would, without any impeachment of credit and character, come ultimately into his own exclusive possession.

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While arrangements were making for departure, Ravenswood made blithe the heart of his ancient butler, by informing him, cautiously however, (for he knew Caleb's warmth of imagination,) of the probable change which was about to take place in his fortunes. He deposited with Balderstone, at the same time, the greater part of his slender funds, with an assurance which he was obliged to reiterate more than once, that he himself had sufficient supplies in certain prospect. He therefore enjoined Caleb, as he valued his favour, to desist from all farther manœuvres against the inhabitants of Wolf's-hope, their cellars, poultry-yards, and substance whatsoever. In this prohibition, the old domestic acquiesced more readily than his master expected.

"It was doubtless," he said, "a shame, a discredit, and a sin, to harry the puir creatures, when the family were in circumstances to live honourably on their ain means; and there might be wisdom," he added, "in giving them a whiles breathing time, at any rate, that they might be the more readily brought forward upon his honour's future occasions."

This matter being settled, and having taken an affectionate farewell of his old domestic, the Master rejoined his noble relative, who was now ready to enter his carriage. The two landladies, old and young, having received in all kindly greeting, a kiss from each of their noble guests, stood simpering at the door of their house, as the coach-and-six, followed by its train of clattering horsemen thundered out of the village. John Girder also stood upon his threshold, now looking at his honoured right hand, which had been so lately shaken by a marquis and a lord, and now giving a glance into the interior of his mansion, which manifested all the disarray of the late revel, as if balancing the distinction which he had attained with the expenses of the entertainment.

At length he opened his oracular jaws. "Let every man and woman here set about their ain business, as if there was nae sic thing as marquis or master, duke or drake, laird or lord, in this world. Let the house be redd

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up, the broken meat set by, and if there is ony thing totally uneatable, let it be gien to the puir folk; and, gudemother and wife, I hae just ae thing to entreat ye, that ye will never speak to me a single word, good or bad, anent a' this nonsense wark, but keep a' your cracks about it to yoursells and your kimmers, for my head is weel nigh dung donnart wi' it already."

As John's authority was tolerably absolute, all departed to their usual occupations, leaving him to build castles in the air, if he had a mind, upon the court favour which he had acquired by the expenditure of his worldly substance.

CHAPTER XXVII.

> Why, now I have Dame Fortune by the forelock,
> And if she 'scapes my grasp, the fault is mine;
> He that hath buffeted with stern adversity,
> Best knows to shape his course to favouring breezes.
>
> *Old Play.*

Our travellers reached Edinburgh without any farther adventure, and the Master of Ravenswood, as had been previously settled, took up his abode with his noble friend.

In the meantime, the political crisis which had been expected, took place, and the Tory party obtained, in the Scottish, as in the English councils of Queen Anne a short-lived ascendency, of which it is not our business to trace either the cause or consequences. Suffice it to say, that it affected the different political parties according to the nature of their principles. In England, many of the High Church party, with Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, at their head, affected to separate their principles from those of the Jacobites, and, on that account, obtained the denomination of Whimsicals. The Scottish High Church party, on the contrary, or, as they termed themselves, the Cavaliers, were more consistent, if not so prudent, in their politics

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and viewed all the changes now made, as preparatory to calling to the throne, upon the Queen's demise, her brother, the Chevalier de St. George. Those who had suffered in his service, now entertained the most unreasonable hopes, not only of indemnification, but of vengeance upon their political adversaries; while families attached to the Whig interest, saw nothing before them but a renewal of the hardships they had undergone during the reigns of Charles the Second and his brother, and a retaliation of the confiscation which had been inflicted upon the Jacobites during that of King William.

But the most alarmed at the change of system, was that prudential set of persons, some of whom are found in all governments, but who abound in a provincial administration like that of Scotland during the period, and who are what Cromwell called waiters upon Providence, or, in other words, uniform adherents to the party who are uppermost. Many of these hastened to read their recantation to the Marquis of A—— ; and as it was easily seen that he took a deep interest in the affairs of his kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood, they were the first to suggest measures for retrieving at least a part of his property, and for restoring him in blood against his father's attainder.

Old Lord Turntippet professed to be one of the most anxious for the success of these measures ; " for it grieved him to the very saul," he said, " to see so brave a young gentleman, of sic auld and undoubted nobility, and, what was mair than a' that, a bluid relation of the Marquis of A——, the man whom," he swore, " he honoured most upon the face of the yearth, brought to so severe a pass. For his ain puir peculiar," as he said, " and to contribute something to the rehabilitation of sae auld ane house," the said Turntippet sent in three family pictures lacking the frames, and six high-backed chairs, with worked Turkey cushions, having the crest of Ravenswood broidered thereon, without charging a penny either of the principal or interest they had cost him, when he bought them, sixteen years before, at a roup of the furniture of Lord Ravenswood's lodgings in the Canongate.

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Much more to Lord Turntippet's dismay than to his surprise, although he affected to feel more of the latter than the former, the Marquis received his gift very dryly, and observed, that his lordship's restitution, if he expected it to be received by the Master of Ravenswood and his friends, must comprehend a pretty large farm, which, having been mortgaged to Turntippet for a very inadequate sum, he had contrived, during the confusion of the family affairs, and by means well understood by the lawyers of that period, to acquire to himself in absolute property.

The old time-serving lord winced excessively under this requisition, protesting to God, that he saw no occasion the lad could have for the instant possession of the land, seeing he would doubtless now recover the bulk of his estate from Sir William Ashton, to which he was ready to contribute by every means in his power, as was just and reasonable; and finally declaring, that he was willing to settle the land on the young gentleman, after his own natural demise.

But all these excuses availed nothing, and he was compelled to disgorge the property, on receiving back the sum for which it had been mortgaged. Having no other means of making peace with the higher powers, he returned home sorrowful and malecontent, complaining to his confidants, "that every mutation or change in the state had hitherto been productive of some sma' advantage to him in his ain quiet affairs; but that the present had (pize upon it!) cost him one of the best pen-feathers o' his wing."

Similar measures were threatened against others, who had profited by the wreck of the fortune of Ravenswood; and Sir William Ashton, in particular, was menaced with an appeal to the House of Peers against the judicial sentences under which he held the Castle and Barony of Ravenswood. With him, however, the Master, as well for Lucy's sake as on account of the hospitality he had received from him, felt himself under the necessity of proceeding with great candour. He wrote to the late Lord Keeper, for he no longer held that office, stating frankly the engagement

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which existed between him and Miss Ashton, requesting his permission for their union, and assuring him of his willingness to put the settlement of all matters between them upon such a footing, as Sir William himself should think favourable.

The same messenger was charged with a letter to Lady Ashton, deprecating any cause of displeasure which the Master might unintentionally have given her, enlarging upon his attachment to Miss Ashton, and the length to which it had proceeded, and conjuring the lady, as a Douglas in nature as well as in name, generously to forget ancient prejudices and misunderstandings; and to believe that the family had acquired a friend, and she herself a respectful and attached humble servant, in him who subscribed himself Edgar, Master of Ravenswood.

A third letter Ravenswood addressed to Lucy, and the messenger was instructed to find some secret and secure means of delivering it into her own hands. It contained the strongest protestations of continued affection, and dwelt upon the approaching change of the writer's fortunes as chiefly valuable, by tending to remove the impediments to their union. He related the steps he had taken to overcome the prejudices of her parents, and especially of her mother, and expressed his hope they might prove effectual. If not, he still trusted that his absence from Scotland upon an important and honourable mission might give time for prejudices to die away; while he hoped and trusted Miss Ashton's constancy, on which he had the most implicit reliance, would baffle any effort that might be used to divert her attachment. Much more there was, which, however interesting to the lovers themselves, would afford the reader neither interest nor information. To each of these three letters the Master of Ravenswood received an answer, but by different means of conveyance, and certainly couched in very different styles.

Lady Ashton answered his letter by his own messenger, who was not allowed to remain at Ravenswood a moment longer than she was engaged in penning these lines. "For the hand of Mr. Ravenswood of Wolf's Crag, these;

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"SIR, UNKNOWN,

"I have received a letter, signed Edgar, Master of Ravenswood, concerning the writer whereof I am uncertain, seeing that the honours of such a family were forfeited for high treason in the person of Allan, late Lord Ravenswood. Sir, if you shall happen to be the person so subscribing yourself, you will please to know that I claim the full interest of a parent in Miss Lucy Ashton, which I have disposed of irrevocably in behalf of a worthy person. And, sir, were this otherwise, I would not listen to a proposal from you, or any of your house, seeing their hand has been uniformly held up against the freedom of the subject, and the immunities of God's kirk. Sir, it is not a flightering blink of prosperity which can change my constant opinion in this regard, seeing it has been my lot before now, like holy David, to see the wicked great in power, and flourishing like a green bay tree; nevertheless I passed, and they were not, and the place thereof knew them no more. Wishing you to lay these things to your heart for your own sake, so far as they may concern you, I pray you to take no farther notice of her, who desires to remain your unknown servant,

"MARGARET DOUGLAS,
"otherwise ASHTON."

About two days after he had received this very unsatisfactory epistle, the Master of Ravenswood, while walking up the High Street of Edinburgh, was jostled by a person, in whom, as the man pulled off his hat to make an apology, he recognized Lockhard, the confidential domestic of Sir William Ashton. The man bowed, slipt a letter into his hand, and disappeared. The packet contained four close-written folios, from which, however, as is sometimes incident to the compositions of great lawyers, little could be extracted, excepting that the writer felt himself in a very puzzling predicament.

Sir William spoke at length of his high value and regard for his dear young friend, the Master of Ravenswood, and of his very extreme high value and regard for the Marquis

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of A——, his very dear old friend;—he trusted that any measures that they might adopt, in which he was concerned, would be carried on with due regard to the sanctity of decreets, and judgments obtained *in foro contentioso*; protesting before men and angels, that if the law of Scotland, as declared in her supreme courts, were to undergo a reversal in the English House of Lords, the evils which would thence arise to the public would inflict a greater wound upon his heart, than any loss he might himself sustain by such irregular proceedings. He flourished much on generosity and forgiveness of mutual injuries, and hinted at the mutability of human affairs, always favourite topics with the weaker party in politics. He pathetically lamented, and gently censured, the haste which had been used in depriving him of his situation of Lord Keeper, which his experience had enabled him to fill with some advantage to the public, without so much as giving him an opportunity of explaining how far his own views of general politics might essentially differ from those now in power. He was convinced the Marquis of A—— had as sincere intentions towards the public, as himself or any man; and if, upon a conference, they could have agreed upon the measures by which it was to be pursued, his experience and his interest should have gone to support the present administration. Upon the engagement betwixt Ravenswood and his daughter, he spoke in a dry and confused manner. He regretted so premature a step as the engagement of the young people should have been taken, and conjured the Master to remember he had never given any encouragement thereunto; and observed, that, as a transaction *inter minores*, and without concurrence of his daughter's natural curators, the engagement was inept, and void in law. This precipitate measure, he added, had produced a very bad effect upon Lady Ashton's mind, which it was impossible at present to remove. Her son, Colonel Douglas Ashton, had embraced her prejudices in the fullest extent, and it was impossible for Sir William to adopt a course disagreeable to them, without a fatal and irreconcilable breach in his family; which was not at

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present to be thought of. Time, the great physician, he hoped would mend all.

In a postscript, Sir William said something more explicitly, which seemed to intimate that rather than the law of Scotland should sustain a severe wound through his sides, by a reversal of the judgment of her supreme courts, in the case of the Barony of Ravenswood, through the intervention of what, with all submission, he must term a foreign court of appeal, he himself would extrajudicially consent to considerable sacrifices.

From Lucy Ashton, by some unknown conveyance, the Master received the following lines:—"I received your's, but it was at the utmost risk; do not attempt to write again till better times. I am sore beset, but I will be true to my word, while the exercise of my reason is vouchsafed to me. That you are happy and prosperous is some consolation, and my situation requires it all." The note was signed L. A.

This letter filled Ravenswood with the most lively alarm. He made many attempts, notwithstanding her prohibition, to convey letters to Miss Ashton, and even to obtain an interview; but his plans were frustrated, and he had only the mortification to learn that anxious and effectual precautions had been taken to prevent the possibility of their correspondence. The Master was the more distressed by these circumstances, as it became impossible to delay his departure from Scotland, upon the important mission which had been confided to him. Before his departure, he put Sir William Ashton's letter into the hands of the Marquis of A——, who observed with a smile, that Sir William's day of grace was past, and that he had now to learn which side of the hedge the sun had got to. It was with the greatest difficulty that Ravenswood extorted from the Marquis a promise, that he would compromise the proceedings in parliament, providing Sir William should be disposed to acquiesce in a union between him and Lucy Ashton.

"I would hardly," said the Marquis, "consent to your throwing away your birth-right in this manner, were I not perfectly confident that Lady Ashton, or Lady Douglas, or whatever she calls herself, will, as Scotchmen say,

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keep her threep, and that her husband dares not contradict her."

"But yet," said the Master, "I trust your Lordship will consider my engagement as sacred?"

"Believe my word of honour," said the Marquis, "I would be a friend even to your follies; and having thus told you *my* opinion, I will endeavour, as occasion offers, to serve you according to your own."

The Master of Ravenswood could but thank his generous kinsman and patron, and leave him full power to act in all his affairs. He departed from Scotland upon his mission, which, it was supposed, might detain him upon the continent for some months.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?
> I'll have her.
>
> *Richard the Third.*

TWELVE months had past away since the Master of Ravenswood's departure for the continent; and although his return to Scotland had been expected in a much shorter space, yet the affairs of his mission, or, according to a prevailing report, others of a nature personal to himself, still detained him abroad. In the meantime, the altered state of affairs in Sir William Ashton's family may be gathered from the following conversation which took place betwixt Bucklaw and his confidential bottle companion and dependant, the noted Captain Craigengelt.

They were seated on either side of the huge sepulchral-looking freestone chimney in the low hall at Girnington. A wood-fire blazed merrily in the grate; a round oaken table, placed between them, supported a stoup of excel-

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lent claret, two rummer glasses, and other good cheer; and yet, with all these appliances and means to boot, the countenance of the patron was dubious, doubtful, and unsatisfied, while the invention of his dependant was taxed to the utmost, to parry what he most dreaded, a fit, as he called it, of the sullens, on the part of his protector. After a long pause, only interrupted by the devil's tattoo, which Bucklaw kept beating against the hearth with the toe of his boot, Craigengelt at last ventured to break silence. "May I be double distanced," said he, "if ever I saw a man in my life have less the air of a bridegroom! Cut me out of feather, if you have not more the look of a man condemned to be hanged!"

"My kind thanks for the compliment," replied Bucklaw; "but I suppose you think upon the predicament in which you yourself are most likely to be placed;—and pray, Captain Craigengelt, if it please your worship, why should I look merry, when I'm sad, and devilish sad too?"

"And that's what vexes me," said Craigengelt. "Here is this match, the best in the whole country, and which you were so anxious about, is on the point of being concluded, and you are as sulky as a bear that has lost its whelps."

"I do not know," answered the laird, doggedly, "whether I should conclude it or not, if it was not that I am too far forwards to leap back."

"Leap back!" exclaimed Craigengelt, with a well-assumed air of astonishment, "that would be playing the back-game with a witness! Leap back! Why, is not the girl's fortune"——

"The young lady's, if you please," said Hayston, interrupting him.

"Well, well, no disrespect meant—Will Miss Ashton's tocher not weigh against any in Lothian?"

"Granted," answered Bucklaw; "but I care not a penny for her tocher, I have enough of my own."

"And the mother, that loves you like her own child?"

"Better than some of her children, I believe," said Bucklaw, "or there would be little love wared on the matter."

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"And Colonel Sholto Douglas Ashton, who desires the marriage above all earthly things?"

"Because," said Bucklaw, "he expects to carry the county of ——— through my interest."

"And the father, who is as keen to see the match concluded, as ever I have been to win a main?"

"Ay," said Bucklaw, in the same disparaging manner, "it lies with Sir William's policy to secure the next best natch, since he cannot barter his child to save the great Ravenswood estate, which the English House of Lords are about to wrench out of his clutches."

"What say you to the young lady herself?" said Craigengelt; "the finest young woman in all Scotland, one that you used to be so fond of when she was cross, and now she consents to have you, and gives up her engagement with Ravenswood, you are for jibbing—I must say, the devil's in ye, when ye neither know what you would have, nor what you would want.

"I'll tell you my meaning in a word," answered Bucklaw, getting up and walking through the room; "I want to know what the devil is the cause of Miss Ashton's changing her mind so suddenly?"

"And what need you care," said Craigengelt, "since the change is in your favour?"

"I'll tell you what it is," returned his patron, "I never knew much of that sort of fine ladies, and I believe they may be as capricious as the devil; but there is something in Miss Ashton's change, a devilish deal too sudden, and too serious for a mere flisk of her own. I'll be bound Lady Ashton understands every machine for breaking in the human mind, and there are as many as there are cannon-bits, martingales, and cavessons for young colts."

"And if that were not the case," said Craigengelt, "how the devil should we ever get them into training at all?"

"And that's true too," said Bucklaw, suspending his march through the dining-room, and leaning upon the back of a chair.—"And besides, here's Ravenswood in the way still; do you think he'll give up Lucy's engagement?"

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"To be sure he will," answered Craigengelt; "what good can it do him to refuse, since he wishes to marry another woman, and she another man?"

"And you believe seriously," said Bucklaw, "that he is going to marry the foreign lady we heard of?"

"You heard yourself," answered Craigengelt, "what Captain Westenho said about it, and the great preparation made for their blithesome bridal."

"Captain Westenho," replied Bucklaw, "has rather too much of your own cast about him, Craigie, to make what Sir William would call a 'famous witness.' He drinks deep, plays deep, swears deep, and I suspect can lie and cheat a little into the bargain. Useful qualities, Craigie, if kept in their proper sphere, but which have a little too much of the freebooter to make a figure in a court of evidence."

"Well then," said Craigengelt, "will you believe Colonel Douglas Ashton, who heard the Marquis of A—— say in a public circle, but not aware that he was within ear-shot, that his kinsman had made a better arrangement for himself, than to give his father's land for the pale-cheeked daughter of a broken-down fanatic; and that Bucklaw was welcome to the wearing of Ravenswood's shaughled shoes."

"Did he say so, by heavens!" cried Bucklaw, breaking out into one of those incontrollable fits of passion, to which he was constitutionally subject,—"If I had heard him, I would have torn the tongue out of his throat before all his peats and minions, and Highland bullies into the bargain. Why did not Ashton run him through the body?"

"Capote me if I know," said the Captain. "He deserved it, sure enough; but he is an old man, and a minister of state, and there would be more risk than credit in meddling with him. You had more need to think of making up to Miss Lucy Ashton the disgrace that's like to fall upon her, than of interfering with a man too old to fight, and on too high a stool for your hand to reach him."

"It *shall* reach him, though, one day," said Bucklaw, "and his kinsman Ravenswood to boot. In the meantime

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I'll take care Miss Ashton receives no discredit for the slight they have put upon her. It's an awkward job, however, and I wish it were ended; I scarce know how to talk to her,—but fill a bumper, Craigie, and we'll drink her health. It grows late, and a night-cowl of good claret is worth all the considering-caps in Europe."

CHAPTER XXIX.

It was the copy of our conference.
In bed she slept not, for my urging it;
At board she fed not, for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced at it.

Comedy of Errors.

The next morning saw Bucklaw, and his faithful Achates, Craigengelt, at Ravenswood Castle. They were most courteously received by the Knight and his lady, as well as by their son and heir, Colonel Ashton. After a good deal of stammering and blushing—for Bucklaw, notwithstanding his audacity in other matters, had all the sheepish bashfulness common to those who have lived little in respectable society,—he contrived at length to explain his wish to be admitted to a conference with Miss Ashton, upon the subject of their approaching union. Sir William and his son looked at Lady Ashton, who replied with the greatest composure, "that Lucy would wait upon Mr. Hayston directly. I hope," she added with a smile, "that as Lucy is very young, and has been lately trepanned into an engagement, of which she is now heartily ashamed, our dear Bucklaw will excuse her wish, that I should be present at their interview?"

"In truth, my dear lady," said Bucklaw, "it is the very thing that I would have desired on my own account:

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for I have been so little accustomed to what is called gallantry, that I shall certainly fall into some cursed mistake, unless I have the advantage of your ladyship as an interpreter."

It was thus that Bucklaw, in the perturbation of his embarrassment upon this critical occasion, forgot the just apprehensions he had entertained of Lady Ashton's overbearing ascendency over her daughter's mind, and lost an opportunity of ascertaining, by his own investigation, the real state of Lucy's feelings.

The other gentlemen left the room, and in a short time Lady Ashton, followed by her daughter, entered the apartment. She appeared, as he had seen her on former occasions, rather composed than agitated; but a nicer judge than he could scarce have determined, whether her calmness was that of despair, or of indifference. Bucklaw was too much agitated by his own feelings minutely to scrutinize those of the lady. He stammered out an unconnected address, confounding together the two or three topics to which it related, and stopt short before he brought it to any regular conclusion. Miss Ashton listened, or looked as if she listened, but returned not a single word in answer, continuing to fix her eyes on a small piece of embroidery, on which, as if by instinct or habit, her fingers were busily employed. Lady Ashton sat at some distance, almost screened from notice by the deep embrasure of the window in which she had placed her chair. From this she whispered, in a tone of voice, which, though soft and sweet, had something in it of admonition, if not command,—"Lucy, my dear, remember—have you heard what Bucklaw has been saying?"

The idea of her mother's presence seemed to have slipped from the unhappy girl's recollection. She started, dropped her needle, and repeated hastily, and almost in the same breath, the contradictory answers, "Yes, madam—no, my lady—I beg pardon, I did not hear."

"You need not blush, my love, and still less need you look so pale and frightened," said Lady Ashton, coming forward; "we know that maidens' ears must be slow in

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receiving a gentleman's language; but you must remember Mr. Hayston speaks on a subject on which you have long since agreed to give him a favourable hearing. You know how much your father and I have our hearts set upon an event so extremely desirable."

In Lady Ashton's voice, a tone of impressive, and even stern innuendo, was sedulously and skilfully concealed, under an appearance of the most affectionate maternal tenderness. The manner was for Bucklaw, who was easily enough imposed upon; the matter of the exhortation was for the terrified Lucy, who well knew how to interpret her mother's hints, however skilfully their real purport might be veiled from general observation.

Miss Ashton sat upright in her chair, cast round her a glance, in which fear was mingled with a still wilder expression, but remained perfectly silent. Bucklaw, who had in the mean time paced the room to and fro, until he had recovered his composure, now stopped within two or three yards of her chair, and broke out as follows:—"I believe I have been a d—d fool, Miss Ashton; I have tried to speak to you, as people tell me young ladies like to be talked to, and I don't think you comprehend what I have been saying; and no wonder, for d—n me if I understand it myself! But, however, once for all, and in broad Scotch, your father and mother like what is proposed, and if you can take a plain young fellow for your husband, who will never cross you in anything you have a mind to, I will place you at the head of the best establishment in the three Lothians; you shall have Lady Girnington's lodging in the Canongate of Edinburgh—go where you please—do what you please—and see what you please—and that's fair. Only I must have a corner at the board-end for a worthless old play-fellow of mine, whose company I would rather want than have, if it were not that the d—d fellow has persuaded me that I can't do without him; and so I hope you won't except against Craigie, although it might be easy to find much better company."

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"Now, out upon you, Bucklaw," said Lady Ashton, again interposing,—"how can you think Lucy can have any objection to that blunt, honest, good-natured creature, Captain Craigengelt?"

"Why, madam," replied Bucklaw, "as to Craigie's sincerity, honesty, and good-nature, they are, I believe, pretty much upon a par—but that's neither here nor there—the fellow knows my ways, and has got useful to me, and I cannot well do without him, as I said before. But all this is nothing to the purpose; for, since I have mustered up courage to make a plain proposal, I would fain hear Miss Ashton, from her own lips, give me a plain answer."

"My dear Bucklaw," said Lady Ashton, "let me spare Lucy's bashfulness. I tell you, in her presence, that she has already consented to be guided by her father and me in this matter.—Lucy, my love," she added, with that singular combination of suavity of tone and pointed energy which we have already noticed—"Lucy, my dearest love! speak for yourself, is it not as I say?"

Her victim answered in a tremulous and hollow voice—"I *have* promised to obey you,—but upon one condition."

"She means," said Lady Ashton, turning to Bucklaw, "she expects an answer to the demand which she has made upon the man at Vienna, or Ratisbon, or Paris,—or where is he—the restitution of the engagement in which he had the art to involve her. You will not, I am sure, my dear friend, think it is wrong that she should feel much delicacy upon this head; indeed, it concerns us all."

"Perfectly right—quite fair," said Bucklaw, half humming, half speaking the end of the old song—

> 'It is best to be off wi' the old love,
> Before you be on wi' the new.'

"But I thought," said he, pausing, "you might have had an answer six times told from Ravenswood. D—n me,

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if I have not a mind to go and fetch one myself, if Miss Ashton will honour me with the commission."

"By no means," said Lady Ashton, "we have had the utmost difficulty of preventing Douglas, (for whom it would be more proper,) from taking so rash a step; and do you think we could permit you, my good friend, almost equally dear to us, to go to a desperate man upon an errand so desperate? In fact, all the friends of the family are of opinion, and my dear Lucy herself ought so to think, that as this unworthy person has returned no answer to her letter, silence must on this, as in other cases, be held to give consent, and a contract must be supposed to be given up, when the party waives insisting upon it. Sir William, who should best know, is clear upon this subject; and therefore, my dear Lucy"——

"Madam," said Lucy, with unwonted energy, "urge me no farther—if this unhappy engagement be restored, I have already said you shall dispose of me as you will—till then I should commit a heavy sin in the sight of God and man, in doing what you require."

"But, my love if this man remains obstinately silent"—

"He will *not* be silent," answered Lucy; "it is six weeks since I sent him a double of my former letter by a sure hand."

"You have not—you could not—you durst not," said Lady Ashton, with violence inconsistent with the tone she had intended to assume; but instantly correcting herself, "my dearest Lucy," said she, in her sweetest tone of expostulation, "how could you think of such a thing?"

"No matter," said Bucklaw; "I respect Miss Ashton for her sentiments, and I only wish I had been her messenger myself."

"And pray, how long, Miss Ashton," said her mother ironically, "are we to wait the return of your Pacolet—your fairy messenger—since our humble couriers of flesh and blood could not be trusted in this matter?"

"I have numbered weeks, days, hours, and minutes, said Miss Ashton; "within another week I shall have an answer, unless he is dead. Till that time, sir," she said,

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addressing Bucklaw, "let me be thus far beholden to you, that you will beg my mother to forbear me upon this subject."

"I will make it my particular entreaty to Lady Ashton," said Bucklaw. "By my honour, madam, I respect your feelings; and although the prosecution of this affair be rendered dearer to me than ever, yet, as I am a gentleman, I would renounce it, were it so urged as to give you a moment's pain."

"Mr. Hayston, I think, cannot apprehend that," said Lady Ashton, looking pale with anger, "when the daughter's happiness lies in the bosom of the mother. Let me ask you, Miss Ashton, in what terms your last letter was couched?"

"Exactly in the same, madam," answered Lucy, "which you dictated on a former occasion."

"When eight days have elapsed, then," said her mother, resuming her tone of tenderness, "we shall hope, my dearest love, that you will end this suspense."

"Miss Ashton must not be hurried, madam," said Bucklaw, whose bluntness of feeling did not by any means arise from want of good-nature—"messengers may be stopped or delayed. I have known a day's journey broke by the casting off a fore-shoe—Stay, let me see my calendar—the 20th day from this is St. Jude's, and the day before I must be at Caverton Edge to see the match between the Laird of Kittlegirth's black mare, and Johnston the meal-monger's four-year-old colt; but I can ride all night, or Craigie can bring me word how the match goes—and I hope, in the meantime, as I shall not myself distress Miss Ashton with any further importunity, that your ladyship yourself, and Sir William, and Colonel Douglas, will have the goodness to allow her uninterrupted time for making up her mind."

"Sir," said Miss Ashton, "you are generous."

"As for that, madam," answered Bucklaw, "I only pretend to be a plain good-humoured young fellow, as I said before, who will willingly make you happy if you will permit him, and show him how to do so."

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Having said this, he saluted her with more emotion than was consistent with his usual train of feeling, and took his leave; Lady Ashton, as she accompanied him out of the apartment, assuring him that her daughter did full justice to the sincerity of his attachment, and requesting him to see Sir William before his departure, "since," as she said, with a keen glance reverting towards Lucy, "against St. Jude's day, we must all be ready to *sign and seal.*"

"To sign and seal!" echoed Lucy in a muttering tone, as the door of the apartment closed—"To sign and seal —to do and die!" and clasping her extenuated hands together, she sunk back on the easy-chair she occupied, in a state resembling stupor.

From this she was shortly after awakened by the boisterous entry of her brother Henry, who clamorously reminded her of a promise to give him two yards of carnation ribbon to make knots to his new garters. With the most patient composure Lucy arose, and opening a little ivory-cabinet, sought out the ribbon the lad wanted, measured it accurately, cut it off into proper lengths, and knotted it into the fashion his boyish whim required.

"Dinna shut the cabinet yet," said Henry, "for I must have some of your silver-wire to fasten the bells to my hawk's jesses, and yet the new falcon's not worth them neither; for do you know, after all the plague we had to get her from an eyry, all the way at Posso, in Mannor Water, she's going to prove, after all, nothing better than a rifler—she just wets her singles in the blood of the partridge, and then breaks away, and lets her fly; and what good can the poor bird do after that, you know, except pine and die in the first heather-cow or whin-bush she can crawl into?"

"Right, Henry—right, very right," said Lucy, mournfully, holding the boy fast by the hand, after she had given him the wire he wanted; "but there are more riflers in the world than your falcon, and more wounded birds that seek but to die in quiet, that can find neither brake nor whin-bush to hide their heads in."

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"Ah!" that's some speech out of your romances," said the boy; "and Shoko says they have turned your head. But I hear Norman whistling to the hawk—I must go fasten on the jesses."

And he scampered away with the thoughtless gaiety of boyhood, leaving his sister to the bitterness of her own reflections.

"It is decreed," she said, "that every living creature, even those who owe me most kindness, are to shun me, and leave me to those by whom I am beset. It is just it should be thus. Alone and uncounselled, I involved myself in these perils—alone and uncounselled, I must extricate myself or die."

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NOTES TO

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

1. Page 37. *Hauds out.* Holds out, *i. e.* presents his piece.

2. Page 62. *Wind him a pirn,* proverbial for preparing a troublesome business for some person.

3. Page 63. *i. e.* Let him pay with his person, who cannot pay with his purse.

4. Page 134. That is, absolute rights of property for the payment of a sum annually, which is usually a trifle in such cases as are alluded to in the text.

5. Page 137. *i. e.* To act as may be necessary and legal, a Scottish law phrase.

6. Page 145. *Weid,* a feverish cold; a disorder incident to infants and to females, is so called.

7. Page 151. Taking up his abode.

8. Page 153. The Raid of Caleb Balderstone on the cooper's kitchen, has been universally considered on the southern side of the Tweed as grotesquely and absurdly extravagant. The author can only say, that a similar anecdote was communicated to him, with date and names of the parties, by a noble Earl lately deceased, whose remembrances of former days, both in Scotland and England, while they were given with a felicity and power of humour never to be forgotten by those who had the happiness of meeting his lordship in familiar society, were especially invaluable from their extreme accuracy.

Speaking after my kind and lamented informer, with the omission of names only, the anecdote ran thus:—There was a certain bachelor gentleman in one of the midland counties of Scotland, second son of an ancient family, who lived on the fortune of a second son, *videlicet*, upon some miserably small annuity, which yet was so managed and stretched out by the expedients of his man John, that his master kept the front rank with all the young men of quality in the county, and hunted, dined, diced, and drank with them, upon apparently equal terms.

It is true, that as the master's society was extremely amusing, his friends contrived to reconcile his man John to accept assistance of various kinds under the rose, which they dared not to have directly offered to his master. Yet, very consistently with all this good inclination to John, and John's master, it was thought among the young fox-hunters, that it would be an excellent jest, if possible, to take John at fault

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With this intention, and, I think, in consequence of a bet, a party of four or five of these youngsters arrived at the bachelor's little mansion, which was adjacent to a considerable village. Here they alighted a short while before the dinner hour—for it was judged regular to give John's ingenuity a fair start—and, rushing past the astonished domestic, entered the little parlour; and, telling some concerted story of the cause of their invasion, the self-invited guests asked their landlord if he could let them have some dinner. Their friend gave them a hearty and unembarrassed reception, and, for the matter of dinner, referred them to John. He was summoned accordingly—received his master's orders to get dinner ready for the party who had thus unexpectedly arrived; and, without changing a muscle of his countenance, promised prompt obedience. Great was the speculation of the visiters, and probably of the landlord also, what was to be the issue of John's fair promises. Some of the more curious had taken a peep into the kitchen, and could see nothing there to realize the prospect held out by the *Major-Domo*. But punctual as the dinner hour struck on the village clock, John placed before them a stately rump of boiled beef, with a proper accompaniment of greens, amply sufficient to dine the whole party, and to decide the bet against those among the visiters who expected to take John napping. The explanation was the same as in the case of Caleb Balderstone. John had used the freedom to carry off the *kail-pot* of a rich old chuff in the village, and brought it to his master's house, leaving the proprietor and his friends to dine on bread and cheese; and, as John said, "good enough for them." The fear of giving offence to so many persons of distinction, kept the poor man sufficiently quiet, and he was afterwards remunerated by some indirect patronage, so that the jest was admitted a good one on all sides. In England, at any period, or in some parts of Scotland at the present day, it might not have passed off so well.

9. Page 155. *Cuittle* may answer to the elegant modern phrase *diddle*.

10. Page 157. It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awaking in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

> "My cummer and I lay down to sleep
> With two pint stoups at our bed-feet;
> And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry:
> What think you o' my cummer and I?"

It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy Baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. "My friend," said one of the venerable guests, "you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest;—only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale."

This synod would have suited the "hermit sage" of Johnson, who answered a pupil who inquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line,

> "Come, my lad, and drink some beer"

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11. Page 172. The power of appeal from the Court of Session, the supreme Judges of Scotland, to the Scottish Parliament, in cases of civil right, was fiercely debated before the Union. It was a privilege highly desirable for the subject, as the examination and occasional reversal of their sentences in Parliament, might serve as a check upon the judges, which they greatly required at a time when they were much more distinguished for legal knowledge than for uprightness and integrity.

The members of the Faculty of Advocates, (so the Scottish barristers are termed,) in the year 1674, incurred the violent displeasure of the Court of Session, on account of their refusal to renounce the right of appeal to Parliament; and, by a very arbitrary procedure, the majority of the number were banished from Edinburgh, and consequently deprived of their professional practice for several sessions, or terms. But, by the articles of the Union, an appeal to the British House of Peers has been secured to the Scottish subject, and that right has, no doubt, had its influence in forming the impartial and independent character which, much contrary to the practice of their predecessors, the Judges of the Court of Session have since displayed.

It is easy to conceive, that an old lawyer like the Lord Keeper in the text, should feel alarm at the judgments given in his favour, upon grounds of strict penal law, being brought to appeal under a new and dreaded procedure in a Court eminently impartial, and peculiarly moved by considerations of equity.

In earlier editions of this Work, this legal distinction was not sufficiently explained.

12. Page 184. *i. e.* They are bounded by my own.

13. Page 185. Broil.

14. Page 199. The blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton is called in Scotland "a poor man," as in some parts of England it is termed "a poor knight of Windsor;" in contrast, it must be presumed, to the baronial Sir Loin. It is said, that in the last age an old Scottish peer, whose conditions (none of the most gentle) were marked by a strange and fierce-looking exaggeration of the Highland countenance, chanced to be indisposed while he was in London attending Parliament. The master of the hotel where he lodged, anxious to show attention to his noble guest, waited on him to enumerate the contents of his well-stocked larder, so as to endeavour to hit on something which might suit his appetite. "I think, landlord," said his lordship, rising up from his couch, and throwing back the tartan plaid with which he had screened his grim and ferocious visage—"I think I could eat a morsel of a *poor man*." The landlord fled in terror, having no doubt that his guest was a cannibal, who might be in the habit of eating a slice of a tenant, as light food, when he was under regimen.

END OF VOLUME I.

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WAVERLEY NOVELS.

VOLUME 14.

TALES OF MY LANDLORD.

THIRD SERIES.

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.—LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groats',
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin notes,
An' faith he'll prent it.
Burns.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

II.

PARKER'S EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH A GENERAL PREFACE, AN INTRODUCTION TO EACH NOVEL, AND NOTES, HISTORICAL AND ILLUSTRATIVE BY

THE AUTHOR.

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1836.

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THE

BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

——————— what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And at her heels a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?
Comedy of Errors

As some vindication of the ease with which Bucklaw (who otherwise, as he termed himself, was really a very good-humoured fellow,) resigned his judgment to the management of Lady Ashton, while paying his addresses to her daughter, the reader must call to mind the strict domestic discipline, which, at this period, was exercised over the females of a Scottish family.

The manners of the country in this, as in many other respects, coincided with those of France before the revolution. Young women of the higher ranks seldom mingled in society until after marriage, and, both in law and fact, were held to be under the strict tutelage of their parents, who were too apt to enforce the views for their settlement in life, without paying any regard to the inclination of the parties chiefly interested. On such occasions, the suitor expected little more from his bride than a silent acquiescence in the will of her parents; and as few opportunities of acquaintance, far less of intimacy, occurred, he made his choice by the outside, as the lov-

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ers in the Merchant of Venice select the casket, contented to trust to chance the issue of the lottery, in which he had hazarded a venture.

It was not therefore surprising, such being the general manners of the age, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom dissipated habits had detached in some degree from the best society, should not attend particularly to those feelings in his elected bride, to which many men of more sentiment, experience, and reflection, would, in all probability, have been equally indifferent. He knew what all accounted the principal point, that her parents and friends, namely, were decidedly in his favour, and that there existed most powerful reasons for their predilection.

In truth, the conduct of the Marquis of A——, since Ravenswood's departure, had been such as almost to bar the possibility of his kinsman's union with Lucy Ashton. The Marquis was Ravenswood's sincere, but misjudging friend; or rather, like many friends and patrons, he consulted what he considered to be his relation's true interest, although he knew that in doing so he run counter to his inclinations.

The Marquis drove on, therefore, with the plenitude of ministerial authority, an appeal to the British House of Peers against those judgments of the courts of law, by which Sir William became possessed of Ravenswood's hereditary property. As this measure, enforced with all the authority of power, was new in Scottish judicial proceedings, though now so frequently resorted to, it was exclaimed against by the lawyers on the opposite side of politics, as an interference with the civil judicature of the country, equally new, arbitrary, and tyrannical. And if it thus affected even strangers connected with them only by political party, it may be guessed what the Ashton family themselves said and thought under so gross a dispensation. Sir William, still more worldly-minded than he was timid, was reduced to despair by the loss by which he was threatened. His son's haughtier spirit was exalted into rage at the idea of being deprived of his expected patrimony. But to Lady Ashton's yet more vindictive temper, the conduct of Ravenswood, or rather of his patron, appeared to be an offence challenging the deepest and

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most immortal revenge. Even the quiet and confiding temper of Lucy herself, swayed by the opinions expressed by all around her, could not but consider the conduct of Ravenswood as precipitate, and even unkind. "It was my father," she repeated with a sigh, "who welcomed him to this place, and encouraged, or at least allowed, the intimacy between us. Should he not have remembered this, and requited it with at least some moderate degree of procrastination in the assertion of his own alleged rights? I would have forfeited for him double the value of these lands, which he pursues with an ardour that shows he has forgotten how much I am implicated in the matter."

Lucy, however, could only murmur these things to herself, unwilling to increase the prejudices against her lover entertained by all around her, who exclaimed against the steps pursued on his account, as illegal, vexatious, and tyrannical, resembling the worst measures in the worst times of the worst Stewarts, and a degradation of Scotland, the decisions of whose learned judges were thus subjected to the review of a court, composed indeed of men of the highest rank, but who were not trained to the study of any municipal law, and might be supposed specially to hold in contempt that of Scotland. As a natural consequence of the alleged injustice meditated towards her father, every means was resorted to, and every argument urged, to induce Miss Ashton to break off her engagement with Ravenswood, as being scandalous, shameful, and sinful, formed with the mortal enemy of her family, and calculated to add bitterness to the distress of her parents.

Lucy's spirit, however, was high; and although unaided and alone, she could have borne much—she could have endured the repinings of her father—his murmurs against what he called the tyrannical usage of the ruling party—his ceaseless charges of ingratitude against Ravenswood—his endless lectures on the various means by which contracts may be voided and annulled—his quotations from the civil, the municipal, and the canon law—and his prelections upon the *patria potestas*.

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She might have borne also in patience, or repelled with scorn, the bitter taunts and occasional violence of her brother Colonel Douglas Ashton, and the impertinent and intrusive interference of other friends and relations. But it was beyond her power effectually to withstand or elude the constant and unceasing persecution of Lady Ashton, who, laying every other wish aside, had bent the whole efforts of her powerful mind to break her daughter's contract with Ravenswood, and to place a perpetual bar between the lovers, by effecting Lucy's union with Bucklaw. Far more deeply skilled than her husband in the recesses of the human heart, she was aware, that in this way she might strike a blow of deep and decisive vengeance upon one, whom she esteemed as her mortal enemy ; nor did she hesitate at raising her arm, although she knew that the wound must be dealt through the bosom of her daughter. With this stern and fixed purpose, she sounded every deep and shallow of her daughter's soul, assumed alternately every disguise of manner which could serve her object, and prepared at leisure every species of dire machinery, by which the human mind can be wrenched from its settled determination. Some of these were of an obvious description, and require only to be cursorily mentioned ; others were characteristic of the time, the country, and the persons engaged in this singular drama.

It was of the last consequence, that all intercourse betwixt the lovers should be stopped, and, by dint of gold and authority, Lady Ashton contrived to possess herself of such a complete command of all who were placed around her daughter, that, in fact, no leaguered fortress was ever more completely blockaded ; while, at the same time, to all outward appearance, Miss Ashton lay under no restriction. The verge of her parents' domains became, in respect to her, like the viewless and enchanted line drawn around a fairy castle, where nothing unpermitted can either enter from without, or escape from within. Thus every letter, in which Ravenswood conveyed to Lucy Ashton the indispensable reasons which detained him abroad, and more than one note which poor Lucy had addressed to him through what she thought a

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secure channel, fell into the hands of her mother. It could not be, but that the tenor of these intercepted letters, especially those of Ravenswood, should contain something to irritate the passions, and fortify the obstinacy, of her into whose hands they fell; but Lady Ashton's passions were too deep-rooted to require this fresh food. She burnt the papers as regularly as she perused them; and as they consumed into vapour and tinder, regarded them with a smile upon her compressed lips, and an exultation in her steady eye, which showed her confidence that the hopes of the writers should soon be rendered equally unsubstantial.

It usually happens that fortune aids the machinations of those who are prompt to avail themselves of every chance that offers. A report was wafted from the continent, founded, like others of the same sort, upon many plausible circumstances, but without any real basis, stating the Master of Ravenswood to be on the eve of marriage with a foreign lady of fortune and distinction. This was greedily caught up by both the political parties, who were at once struggling for power and for popular favour, and who seized, as usual, upon the most private circumstances in the lives of each other's partizans to convert them into subjects of political discussion.

The Marquis of A—— gave his opinion aloud and publicly, not indeed in the coarse terms ascribed to him by Captain Craigengelt, but in a manner sufficiently offensive to the Ashtons:—"He thought the report," he said, "highly probable, and heartily wished it might be true. Such a match was fitter and far more creditable for a spirited young fellow, than a marriage with the daughter of an old whig lawyer, whose chicanery had so nearly ruined his father."

The other party, of course, laying out of view the opposition which the Master of Ravenswood received from Miss Ashton's family, cried shame upon his fickleness and perfidy, as if he had seduced the young lady into an engagement, and wilfully and causelessly abandoned her for another.

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Sufficient care was taken that this report should find its way to Ravenswood Castle through every various channel, Lady Ashton being well aware, that the very reiteration of the same rumour from so many quarters could not but give it a semblance of truth. By some it was told as a piece of ordinary news, by some communicated as serious intelligence; now it was whispered to Lucy Ashton's ear in the tone of malignant pleasantry, and now transmitted to her as a matter of grave and serious warning.

Even the boy Henry was made the instrument of adding to his sister's torments. One morning he rushed into the room with a willow branch in his hand, which he told her had arrived that instant from Germany for her special wearing. Lucy, as we have seen, was remarkably fond of her younger brother, and at that moment his wanton and thoughtless unkindness seemed more keenly injurious than even the studied insults of her elder brother. Her grief, however, had no shade of resentment; she folded her arms about the boy's neck, and saying faintly, "Poor Henry! you speak but what they tell you," she burst into a flood of unrestrained tears. The boy was moved, notwithstanding the thoughtlessness of his age and character. "The devil take me," said he, "Lucy, if I fetch you any more of these tormenting messages again; for I like you better," said he, kissing away the tears, "than the whole pack of them; and you shall have my grey pony to ride on, and you shall canter him if you like, ay, and ride beyond the village too if you have a mind."

"Who told you," said Lucy, "that I am not permitted to ride where I please?"

"That's a secret," said the boy; "but you will find you can never ride beyond the village but your horse will cast a shoe, or fall lame, or the castle bell will ring, or something will happen to bring you back. But if I tell you more of these things, Douglas will not get me the pair of colours they have promised me, and so good-morrow to you."

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This dialogue plunged Lucy in still deeper dejection, as it tended to show her plainly, what she had for some time suspected, that she was little better than a prisoner at large in her father's house. We have described her in the outset of our story as of a romantic disposition, delighting in tales of love and wonder, and readily identifying herself with the situation of those legendary heroines, with whose adventures, for want of better reading, her memory had become stocked. The fairy wand, with which in her solitude she had delighted to raise visions of enchantment, became now the rod of a magician, the bond slave of evil genii, serving only to invoke spectres at which the exorcist trembled. She felt herself the object of suspicion, of scorn, of dislike at least, if not of hatred, to her own family; and it seemed to her that she was abandoned by the very person on whose account she was exposed to the enmity of all around her. Indeed the evidence of Ravenswood's infidelity began to assume every day a more determined character.

A soldier of fortune of the name of Westenho, an old familiar of Craigengelt's, chanced to arrive from abroad about this time. The worthy Captain, though without any precise communication with Lady Ashton, always acted most regularly and sedulously in support of her plans, and easily prevailed upon his friend, by dint of exaggeration of real circumstances, and coining of others, to give explicit testimony to the truth of Ravenswood's approaching marriage.

Thus beset on all hands, and in a manner reduced to despair, Lucy's temper gave way under the pressure of constant affliction and persecution. She became gloomy and abstracted, and, contrary to her natural and ordinary habit of mind, sometimes turned with spirit and even fierceness on those by whom she was long and closely annoyed. Her health also began to be shaken, and her hectic cheek and wandering eye gave symptoms of what is called a fever upon the spirits. In most mothers this would have moved compassion; but Lady Ashton, compact and firm of purpose, saw these waverings of health

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and intellect with no greater sympathy than that with which the hostile engineer regards the towers of a beleaguered city as they reel under the discharge of his artillery, or rather she considered these starts and inequalities of temper as symptoms of Lucy's expiring resolution; as the angler, by the throes and convulsive exertions of the fish which he has hooked, becomes aware that he soon will be able to land him. To accelerate the catastrophe in the present case, Lady Ashton had recourse to an expedient very consistent with the temper and credulity of those times, but which the reader will probably pronounce truly detestable and diabolical.

CHAPTER II.

* * * * * *

"In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weeds,
And wilful want, all careless of her needs:
So choosing solitary to abide,
Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off, unknown, whome'er she envied."

Fairy Queen.

THE health of Lucy Ashton soon required the assistance of a person more skilful in the office of a sick nurse than the female domestics of the family. Ailsie Gourlay, sometimes called the Wise Woman of Bowden, was the person whom, for her own strong reasons, Lady Ashton selected as an attendant upon her daughter.

This woman had acquired a considerable reputation among the ignorant by the pretended cures which she performed, especially in *on-comes*, as the Scotch call them, or mysterious diseases which baffle the regular physician. Her pharmacopeia consisted partly of herbs selected in planetary hours, partly of words, signs, and charms, which sometimes, perhaps, produced a favour-

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able influence upon the imagination of her patients. Such was the avowed profession of Lucky Gourlay, which, as may well be supposed, was looked upon with a suspicious eye, not only by her neighbours, but even by the clergy of the district. In private, however, she traded more deeply in the occult sciences; for, notwithstanding the dreadful punishments inflicted upon the supposed crime of witchcraft, there wanted not those who, steeled by want and bitterness of spirit, were willing to adopt the hateful and dangerous character, for the sake of the influence which its terrors enabled them to exercise in the vicinity, and the wretched emolument which they could extract by the practice of their supposed art.

Ailsie Gourlay was not indeed fool enough to acknowledge a compact with the Evil One, which would have been a swift and ready road to the stake and tar-barrel. Her fairy, she said, like Caliban's, was a harmless fairy. Nevertheless, she "spaed fortunes," read dreams, composed philtres, discovered stolen goods, and made and dissolved matches as successfully as if, according to the belief of the whole neighbourhood, she had been aided in those arts by Beelzebub himself. The worst of the pretenders to these sciences was, that they were generally persons who, feeling themselves odious to humanity, were careless of what they did to deserve the public hatred. Real crimes were often committed under pretence of magical imposture; and it somewhat relieves the disgust with which we read, in the criminal records, the conviction of these wretches, to be aware that many of them merited, as poisoners, suborners, and diabolical agents in secret domestic crimes, the severe fate to which they were condemned for the imaginary guilt of witchcraft.

Such was Ailsie Gourlay, whom, in order to attain the absolute subjugation of Lucy Ashton's mind, her mother thought it fitting to place near her person. A woman of less consequence than Lady Ashton had not dared to take such a step; but her high rank and strength of character set her above the censure of the world, and she was

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allowed to have selected for her daughter's attendant the best and most experienced sick-nurse "and mediciner" in the neighbourhood, where an inferior person would have fallen under the reproach of calling in the assistance of a partner and ally of the great enemy of mankind.

The beldame caught her cue readily and by innuendo, without giving Lady Ashton the pain of distinct explanation. She was in many respects qualified for the part she played, which indeed could not be efficiently assumed without some knowledge of the human heart and passions. Dame Gourlay perceived that Lucy shuddered at her external appearance, which we have already described when we found her in the death-chamber of blind Alice; and while internally she hated the poor girl for the involuntary horror with which she saw she was regarded, she commenced her operations by endeavouring to efface or overcome those prejudices which in her heart she resented as mortal offences. This was easily done, for the hag's external ugliness was soon balanced by a show of kindness and interest, to which Lucy had of late been little accustomed; her attentive services and real skill gained her the ear, if not the confidence, of her patient; and under pretence of diverting the solitude of a sick room, she soon led her attention captive by the legends in which she was well skilled, and to which Lucy's habits of reading and reflection induced her to "lend an attentive ear." Dame Gourlay's tales were at first of a mild and interesting character—

> Of fays that nightly dance upon the wold,
> And lovers doomed to wander and to weep,
> And castles high, where wicked wizards keep
> Their captive thralls.

Gradually, however, they assumed a darker and more mysterious character, and became such as, told by the midnight lamp, and enforced by the tremulous tone, the quivering and livid lip, the uplifted skinny forefinger, and the shaking head of the blue-eyed hag, might have appalled a less credulous imagination, in an age more

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hard of belief. The old Sycorax saw her advantage, and gradually narrowed her magic circle around the devoted victim on whose spirits she practised. Her legends began to relate to the fortunes of the Ravenswood family, whose ancient grandeur and portentous authority, credulity had graced with so many superstitious attributes. The story of the fatal fountain was narrated at full length, and with formidable additions, by the ancient sibyl. The prophecy, quoted by Caleb, concerning the dead bride, who was to be won by the last of the Ravenswoods, had its own mysterious commentary; and the singular circumstance of the apparition, seen by the Master of Ravenswood in the forest, having partly transpired through his hasty inquiries in the cottage of old Alice, formed a theme for many exaggerations.

Lucy might have despised these tales, if they had been related concerning another family, or if her own situation had been less despondent. But circumstanced as she was, the idea that an evil fate hung over her attachment, became predominant over her other feelings, and the gloom of superstition darkened a mind, already sufficiently weakened by sorrow, distress, uncertainty, and an oppressive sense of desertion and desolation. Stories were told by her attendant so closely resembling her own in their circumstances, that she was gradually led to converse upon such tragic and mystical subjects with the beldame, and to repose a sort of confidence in the sibyl, whom she still regarded with involuntary shuddering. Dame Gourlay knew how to avail herself of this imperfect confidence. She directed Lucy's thoughts to the means of inquiring into futurity,—the surest mode, perhaps, of shaking the understanding and destroying the spirits. Omens were expounded, dreams were interpreted, and other tricks of jugglery perhaps resorted to, by which the pretended adepts of the period deceived and fascinated their deluded followers. I find it mentioned in the articles of dittay against Ailsie Gourlay,——(for it is some comfort to know that the old hag was tried, condemned, and burned

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on the top of North-Berwick-Law, by sentence of a commission from the Privy Council)—I find, I say, it was charged against her, among other offences, that she had, by the aid and delusions of Satan, shown to a young person of quality, in a mirror glass, a gentleman then abroad, to whom the said young person was betrothed, and who appeared in the vision to be in the act of bestowing his hand upon another lady. But this and some other parts of the record appear to have been studiously left imperfect in names and dates, probably out of regard to the honour of the families concerned. If Dame Gourlay was able actually to play off such a piece of jugglery, it is clear she must have had better assistance to practise the deception, than her own skill or funds could supply. Meanwhile this mysterious visionary traffic had its usual effect, in unsettling Miss Ashton's mind. Her temper became unequal, her health decayed daily, her manners grew moping, melancholy, and uncertain. Her father, guessing partly at the cause of these appearances, and exerting a degree of authority unusual with him, made a point of banishing Dame Gourlay from the castle; but the arrow was shot, and was rankling barb-deep in the side of the wounded deer.

It was shortly after the departure of this woman, that Lucy Ashton, urged by her parents, announced to them, with a vivacity by which they were startled, "that she was conscious heaven and earth and hell had set themselves against her union with Ravenswood; still her contract," she said, "was a binding contract, and she neither would nor could resign it without the consent of Ravenswood. Let me be assured," she concluded, "that he will free me from my engagement, and dispose of me as you please, I care not how. When the diamonds are gone, what signifies the casket?"

The tone of obstinacy with which this was said, her eyes flashing with unnatural light, and her hands firmly clenched, precluded the possibility of dispute; and the utmost length which Lady Ashton's art could attain, only got her the privilege of dictating the letter, by which her

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daughter required to know of Ravenswood whether he intended to abide by, or to surrender, what she termed, "their unfortunate engagement." Of this advantage, Lady Ashton so far and so ingeniously availed herself, that, according to the wording of the letter, the reader would have supposed Lucy was calling upon her lover to renounce a contract which was contrary to the interests and inclinations of both. Not trusting even to this point of deception, Lady Ashton finally determined to suppress the letter altogether, in hopes that Lucy's impatience would induce her to condemn Ravenswood unheard and in absence. In this she was disappointed. The time, indeed, had long elapsed, when an answer should have been received from the continent. The faint ray of hope which still glimmered in Lucy's mind, was well nigh extinguished. But the idea never forsook her, that her letter might not have been duly forwarded. One of her mother's new machinations unexpectedly furnished her with the means of ascertaining what she most desired to know.

The female agent of hell having been dismissed from the castle, Lady Ashton, who wrought by all variety of means, resolved to employ, for working the same end on Lucy's mind, an agent of a very different character. This was no other than the Reverend Mr. Bide-the-bent, a Presbyterian clergyman, formerly mentioned, of the very strictest order and the most rigid orthodoxy, whose aid she called in upon the principle of the tyrant in the tragedy:—

> "I'll have a priest shall preach her from her faith,
> And make it sin not to renounce that vow,
> Which I'd have broken——"

But Lady Ashton was mistaken in the agent she had selected. His prejudices, indeed, were easily enlisted on her side, and it was no difficult matter to make him regard with horror the prospect of a union betwixt the daughter of a God-fearing, professing, and presbyterian family of distinction, with the heir of a blood-thirsty prelatist and persecutor, the hands of whose fathers had been dyed to the wrists in the blood of God's saints. This resembled

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in the divine's opinion, the union of a Moabitish stranger with a daughter of Zion. But with all the more severe prejudices and principles of his sect, Bide-the-bent possessed a sound judgment, and had learnt sympathy even in that very school of persecution, where the heart is so frequently hardened. In a private interview with Miss Ashton, he was deeply moved by her distress, and could not but admit the justice of her request to be permitted a direct communication with Ravenswood, upon the subject of their solemn contract. When she urged to him the great uncertainty under which she laboured, whether her letter had been ever forwarded, the old man paced the room with long steps, shook his grey head, rested repeatedly for a space on his ivory-headed staff, and, after much hesitation, confessed that he thought her doubts so reasonable, that he would himself aid in the removal of them.

"I cannot but opine, Miss Lucy," he said, "that your worshipful lady mother hath in this matter an eagerness, whilk, although it ariseth doubtless from love to your best interests here and hereafter,—for the man is of persecuting blood, and himself a persecutor, a cavalier or malignant, and a scoffer, who hath no inheritance in Jesse,—nevertheless we are commanded to do justice unto all, and to fulfil our bond and covenant, as well to the stranger, as to him who is in brotherhood with us. Wherefore myself, even I myself, will be aiding unto the delivery of your letter to the man Edgar Ravenswood, trusting that the issue thereof may be your deliverance from the nets in which he hath sinfully engaged you. And that I may do in this neither more nor less than hath been warranted by your honourable parents, I pray you to transcribe, without increment or subtraction, the letter formerly expeded under the dictation of your right honourable mother; and I shall put it into such sure course of being delivered, that if, honoured young madam, you shall receive no answer, it will be necessary that you conclude that the man meaneth in silence to abandon that naughty contract, which, peradventure, he may be unwilling directly to restore."

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Lucy eagerly embraced the expedient of the worthy divine. A new letter was written in the precise terms of the former, and consigned by Mr. Bide-the-bent to the charge of Saunders Moonshine, a zealous elder of the church when on shore, and, when on board his brig, as bold a smuggler as ever ran out a sliding bowsprit to the winds that blow betwixt Campvere and the east coast of Scotland. At the recommendation of his pastor, Saunders readily undertook that the letter should be securely conveyed to the Master of Ravenswood at the court where he now resided.

This retrospect became necessary to explain the conference betwixt Miss Ashton, her mother, and Bucklaw, which we have detailed in a preceding chapter.

Lucy was now like the sailor, who, while drifting through a tempestuous ocean, clings for safety to a single plank, his powers of grasping it becoming every moment more feeble, and the deep darkness of the night only chequered by the flashes of lightning, hissing as they show the white tops of the billows, in which he is soon to be engulphed.

Week crept away after week, and day after day. St. Jude's day arrived, the last and protracted term to which Lucy had limited herself, and there was neither letter nor news of Ravenswood.

CHAPTER III.

> How fair these names! how much unlike they look
> To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book!
> The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
> Tapering, yet straight, like pine-trees in his grove;
> While free and fine the bride's appear below,
> As light and slender as her jessamines grow.
>
> *Crabbe.*

St. Jude's day came, the term assigned by Lucy herself as the farthest date of expectation, and, as we have

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already said, there were neither letters from, nor news of, Ravenswood. But there were news of Bucklaw, and of his trusty associate Craigengelt, who arrived early in the morning for the completion of the proposed espousals, and for signing the necessary deeds.

These had been carefully prepared under the revisal of Sir William Ashton himself, it having been resolved, on account of the state of Miss Ashton's health, as it was said, that none save the parties immediately interested should be present when the parchments were subscribed. It was farther determined, that the marriage should be solemnized upon the fourth day after signing the articles, a measure adopted by Lady Ashton, in order that Lucy might have as little time as possible to recede, or relapse into intractability. There was no appearance, however, of her doing either. She heard the proposed arrangement with the calm indifference of despair, or rather with an apathy arising from the oppressed and stupified state of her feelings. To an eye so unobserving as that of Bucklaw, her demeanour had little more of reluctance than might suit the character of a bashful young lady, who, however, he could not disguise from himself, was complying with the choice of her friends, rather than exercising any personal predilection in his favour.

When the morning compliments of the bridegroom had been paid, Miss Ashton was left for some time to herself; her mother remarking, that the deeds must be signed before the hour of noon, in order that the marriage might be happy.

Lucy suffered herself to be attired for the occasion, as the taste of her attendants suggested, and was of course splendidly arrayed. Her dress was composed of white satin and Brussels lace, and her hair arranged with a profusion of jewels, whose lustre made a strange contrast to the deadly paleness of her complexion, and to the trouble which dwelt in her unsettled eye.

Her toilette was hardly finished, ere Henry appeared to conduct the passive bride to the state apartment, where all was prepared for signing the contract. "Do you know,

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sister," he said, "I am glad you are to have Bucklaw after all, instead of Ravenswood, who looked like a Spanish grandee come to cut our throats, and trample our bodies under foot. And I am glad the broad seas are between us this day, for I shall never forget how frightened I was when I took him for the picture of old Sir Malise walked out of the canvass. Tell me true, are you not glad to be fairly shot of him?"

"Ask me no questions, dear Henry," said his unfortunate sister; "there is little more can happen to make me either glad or sorry in this world."

"And that's what all young brides say," said Henry; "and so do not be cast down, Lucy, for you'll tell another tale a twelvemonth hence—and I am to be bride's-man, and ride before you to the kirk, and all our kith, kin, and allies, and all Bucklaw's, are to be mounted and in order—and I am to have a scarlet laced coat, and a feathered hat, and a sword-belt, double bordered with gold, and *point d'espagne*, and a dagger instead of a sword; and I should like a sword much better, but my father won't hear of it. All my things, and a hundred besides, are to come out from Edinburgh to-night with old Gilbert, and the sumpter mules—and I will bring them, and show them to you the instant they come."

The boy's chatter was here interrupted by the arrival of Lady Ashton, somewhat alarmed at her daughter's stay. With one of her sweetest smiles, she took Lucy's arm under her own, and led her to the apartment where her presence was expected.

There were only present, Sir William Ashton, and Colonel Douglas Ashton, the last in full regimentals—Bucklaw in bridegroom trim—Craigengelt freshly equipt from top to toe by the bounty of his patron, and bedizened with as much lace as might have become the dress of the Copper Captain, together with the Rev. Mr. Bide-the-bent; the presence of a minister being, in strict presbyterian families, an indispensable requisite upon all occasions of unusual solemnity.

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Wines and refreshments were placed on a table, on which the writings were displayed, ready for signature.

But before proceeding either to business or refreshment, Mr. Bide-the-bent, at a signal from Sir William Ashton, invited the company to join him in a short extemporary prayer, in which he implored a blessing upon the contract now to be solemnized between the honourable parties then present. With the simplicity of his times and profession, which permitted strong personal allusions, he petitioned, that the wounded mind of one of these noble parties might be healed, in reward of her compliance with the advice of her right honourable parents; and that, as she had proved herself a child after God's commandment, by honouring her father and mother, she and her's might enjoy the promised blessing—length of days in the land here, and a happy portion hereafter in a better country. He prayed farther, that the bridegroom might be weaned from those follies which seduce youth from the path of knowledge; that he might cease to take delight in vain and unprofitable company, scoffers, rioters, and those who sit late at the wine, (here Bucklaw winked to Craigengelt,) and cease from the society that causeth to err. A suitable supplication in behalf of Sir William and Lady Ashton, and their family, concluded this religious address, which thus embraced every individual present, excepting Craigengelt, whom the worthy divine probably considered as past all hopes of grace.

The business of the day now went forward; Sir William Ashton signed the contract with legal solemnity and precision; his son, with military *non-chalance;* and Bucklaw, having subscribed as rapidly as Craigengelt could manage to turn the leaves, concluded by wiping his pen on that worthy's new laced cravat.

It was now Miss Ashton's turn to sign the writings, and she was guided by her watchful mother to the table for that purpose. At her first attempt, she began to write with a dry pen, and when the circumstance was pointed out, seemed unable after several attempts, to dip it in the massive silver ink-standish, which stood full before her.

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Lady Ashton's vigilance hastened to supply the deficiency. I have myself seen the fatal deed, and in the distinct characters in which the name of Lucy Ashton is traced on each page, there is only a very slight tremulous irregularity, indicative of her state of mind at the time of the subscription. But the last signature is incomplete, defaced, and blotted ; for while her hand was employed in tracing it, the hasty tramp of a horse was heard at the gate, succeeded by a step in the outer gallery, and a voice, which, in a commanding tone, bore down the opposition of the menials. The pen dropped from Lucy's fingers, as she exclaimed, with a faint shriek—" He is come—he is come !"

CHAPTER IV.

This by his tongue should be a Montague !
Fetch me my rapier, boy ;
Now, by the faith and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

Romeo and Juliet.

Hardly had Miss Ashton dropped the pen, when the door of the apartment flew open, and the Master of Ravenswood entered the apartment.

Lockhard and another domestic, who had in vain attempted to oppose his passage through the gallery or antechamber, were seen standing on the threshold transfixed with surprise, which was instantly communicated to the whole party in the state-room. That of Colonel Douglas Ashton was mingled with resentment ; that of Bucklaw, with haughty and affected indifference ; the rest, even Lady Ashton herself, showed signs of fear, and Lucy seemed stiffened to stone by this unexpected apparition. Apparition it might well be termed, for Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead, than of a living visiter.

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He planted himself full in the middle of the apartment, opposite to the table at which Lucy was seated, on whom, as if she had been alone in the chamber, he bent his eyes with a mingled expression of deep grief and deliberate indignation. His dark-coloured riding cloak, displaced from one shoulder, hung around one side of his person in the ample folds of the Spanish mantle. The rest of his rich dress was travel-soil'd, and deranged by hard riding. He had a sword by his side, and pistols in his belt. His slouched hat, which he had not removed at entrance, gave an additional gloom to his dark features, which, wasted by sorrow, and marked by the ghastly look communicated by long illness, added to a countenance naturally somewhat stern and wild, a fierce and even savage expression. The matted and dishevelled locks of hair which escaped from under his hat, together with his fixed and unmoved posture, made his head more resemble that of a marble bust than that of a living man. He said not a single word, and there was a deep silence in the company for more than two minutes.

It was broken by Lady Ashton, who in that space partly recovered her natural audacity. She demanded to know the cause of this unauthorized intrusion.

"That is a question, madam," said her son, "which I have the best right to ask—and I must request of the Master of Ravenswood to follow me, where he can answer it at leisure."

Bucklaw interposed, saying, "No man on earth should usurp his previous right in demanding an explanation from the Master.—Craigengelt," he added, in an under tone, "d—n ye, why do you stand staring as if you saw a ghost? fetch me my sword from the gallery."

"I will relinquish to none," said Colonel Ashton, "my right of calling to account the man who has offered this unparalleled affront to my family."

"Be patient, gentlemen," said Ravenswood, turning sternly towards them, and waving his hand as if to impose silence on their altercation. "If you are as weary of your lives as I am, I will find time and place to pledge

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mine against one or both; at present I have no leisure for the disputes of triflers."

"Triflers!" echoed Colonel Ashton, half unsheathing his sword, while Bucklaw laid his hand on the hilt of that which Craigengelt had just reached him.

Sir William Ashton, alarmed for his son's safety, rushed between the young men and Ravenswood, exclaiming, "My son, I command you—Bucklaw, I entreat you—keep the peace, in the name of the Queen and of the law!"

"In the name of the law of God," said Bide-the-bent, advancing also with uplifted hands between Bucklaw, the Colonel, and the object of their resentment—"In the name of Him who brought peace on earth, and good-will to mankind, I implore—I beseech—I command you to forbear violence towards each other! God hateth the blood-thirsty man—he who striketh with the sword, shall perish with the sword."

"Do you take me for a dog, sir," said Colonel Ashton, turning fiercely upon him, "or something more brutally stupid, to endure this insult in my father's house?—Let me go, Bucklaw! he shall account to me, or, by Heaven, I will stab him where he stands."

"You shall not touch him here," said Bucklaw; "he once gave me my life, and were he the devil come to fly away with the whole house and generation, he shall have nothing but fair play."

The passions of the two young men thus counteracting each other, gave Ravenswood leisure to exclaim, in a stern and steady voice, "Silence!—let him who really seeks danger, take the fitting time when it is to be found; my mission here will be shortly accomplished.—Is *that*, your hand-writing, madam?" he added in a softer tone, extending towards Miss Ashton her last letter.

A faltering "Yes," seemed rather to escape from her lips, than to be uttered as a voluntary answer.

"And is *this* also your hand-writing?" extending towards her the mutual engagement.

Lucy remained silent. Terror, and a yet stronger and more confused feeling, so utterly disturbed her under-

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standing, that she probably scarce comprehended the question that was put to her.

"If you design," said Sir William Ashton, "to found any legal claim on that paper, sir, do not expect to receive any answer to an extrajudicial question."

"Sir William Ashton," said Ravenswood, "I pray you, and all who hear me, that you will not mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract, as her letter would seem to imply—there is not a withered leaf which this autumn wind strews on the heath, that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must and will hear the truth from her own mouth—without this satisfaction I will not leave this spot. Murder me by numbers you possibly may; but I am an armed man—I am a desperate man—and I will not die without ample vengeance. This is my resolution, take it as you may. I WILL hear her determination from her own mouth; from her own mouth, alone, and without witnesses, will I hear it. Now choose," he said, drawing his sword with the right hand, and, with the left, by the same motion taking a pistol from his belt and cocking it, but turning the point of one weapon and the muzzle of the other to the ground,—"Choose if you will have this hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride, which the laws of God and the country alike entitle me to demand."

All recoiled at the sound of his voice, and the determined action by which it was accompanied; for the ecstasy of real desperation seldom fails to overpower the less energetic passions by which it may be opposed. The clergyman was the first to speak. "In the name of God," he said, "receive an overture of peace from the meanest of his servants. What this honourable person demands, albeit it is urged with over violence, hath yet in it something of reason. Let him hear from Miss Lucy's own lips that she hath dutifully acceded to the will of her parents, and repenteth her of her covenant with him; and when he is assured of this, he will depart in peace unto his own dwelling, and cumber us no more. Alas! the

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workings of the ancient Adam are strong even in the regenerate—surely we should have long suffering with those who, being yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, are swept forward by the uncontrollable current of worldly passion. Let then the Master of Ravenswood have the interview on which he insisteth ; it can but be as a passing pang to this honourable maiden, since her faith is now irrevocably pledged to the choice of her parents. Let it, I say, be thus ; it belongeth to my functions to entreat your honours' compliance with this healing overture."

"Never!" answered Lady Ashton, whose rage had now overcome her first surprise and terror—"never shall this man speak in private with my daughter, the affianced bride of another! Pass from this room who will, I remain here. I fear neither his violence nor his weapons, though some," she said, glancing a look towards Colonel Ashton, "who bear my name, appear more moved by them."

"For God's sake, madam," answered the worthy divine, "add not fuel to firebrands. The Master of Ravenswood cannot, I am sure, object to your presence, the young lady's state of health being considered, and your maternal duty. I myself will also tarry ; peradventure my grey hairs may turn away wrath."

"You are welcome to do so, sir," said Ravenswood ; "and Lady Ashton is also welcome to remain, if she shall think proper ; but let all others depart."

"Ravenswood," said Colonel Ashton, crossing him as he went out, "you shall account for this ere long."

"When you please," replied Ravenswood.

"But I," said Bucklaw, with a half smile, "have a prior demand on your leisure, a claim of some standing."

"Arrange it as you will," said Ravenswood ; "leave me but this day in peace, and I will have no dearer employment on earth, to-morrow, than to give you all the satisfaction you can desire."

The other gentlemen left the apartment ; but Sir William Ashton lingered.

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"Master of Ravenswood," he said, in a conciliating tone, "I think I have not deserved that you should make this scandal and outrage in my family. If you will sheathe your sword, and retire with me into my study, I will prove to you, by the most satisfactory arguments, the inutility of your present irregular procedure——'

"To-morrow, sir—to-morrow—to-morrow, I will hear you at length," reiterated Ravenswood, interrupting him; "this day hath its own sacred and indispensable business."

He pointed to the door, and Sir William left the apartment.

Ravenswood sheathed his sword, uncocked and returned his pistol to his belt, walked deliberately to the door of the apartment, which he bolted—returned, raised his hat from his forehead, and gazing upon Lucy with eyes in which an expression of sorrow overcame their late fierceness, spread his dishevelled locks back from his face, and said, "Do you know me, Miss Ashton?—I am still Edgar Ravenswood." She was silent, and he went on with increasing vehemence—"I am still that Edgar Ravenswood, who, for your affection, renounced the dear ties by which injured honour bound him to seek vengeance. I am that Ravenswood, who, for your sake, forgave, nay, clasped hands in friendship with the oppressor and pillager of his house—the traducer and murderer of his father."

"My daughter," answered Lady Ashton, interrupting him, has no occasion to dispute the identity of your person; the venom of your present language is sufficient to remind her, that she speaks with the mortal enemy of her father."

"I pray you to be patient, madam," answered Ravenswood; "my answer must come from her own lips.—Once more, Miss Lucy Ashton, I am that Ravenswood to whom you granted the solemn engagement, which you now desire to retract and cancel."

Lucy's bloodless lips could only falter out the words, "it was my mother."

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"She speaks truly," said Lady Ashton, "it *was* I, who, authorized alike by the laws of God and man, advised her, and concurred with her, to set aside an unhappy and precipitate engagement, and to annul it by the authority of scripture itself."

"Scripture!" said Ravenswood, scornfully.

"Let him hear the text," said Lady Ashton, appealing to the divine, "on which you yourself with cautious reluctance, declared the nullity of the pretended engagement insisted upon by this violent man."

The clergyman took his clasped Bible from his pocket, and read the following words: "*If a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth, and her father hear her vow and her bond, wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vow shall stand, and every vow wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.*"

"And was it not even so with us?" interrupted Ravenswood.

"Control thy impatience, young man," answered the divine, and hear what follows in the sacred text:—'*But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand: And the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.*'"

"And was not," said Lady Ashton, fiercely and triumphantly breaking in,—"was not our's the case stated in the holy writ?—Will this person deny, that the instant her parents heard of the vow, or bond, by which our daughter had bound her soul, we disallowed the same in the most express terms, and informed him by writing of our determination?"

"And is this all?" said Ravenswood, looking at Lucy —"Are you willing to barter sworn faith, the exercise of free will, and the feelings of mutual affection, to this wretched hypocritical sophistry?"

"Hear him!" said Lady Ashton, looking to the clergyman—"hear the blasphemer!"

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"May God forgive him," said Bide-the-bent, "and enlighten his ignorance!"

"Hear what I have sacrificed for you," said Ravenswood, still addressing Lucy, "ere you sanction what has been done in your name. The honour of an ancient family, the urgent advice of my best friends, have been in vain used to sway my resolution; neither the arguments of reason, nor the portents of superstition, have shaken my fidelity. The very dead have arisen to warn me, and their warning has been despised. Are you prepared to pierce my heart for its fidelity, with the very weapon which my rash confidence intrusted to your grasp?"

"Master of Ravenswood," said Lady Ashton, "you have asked what questions you thought fit. You see the total incapacity of my daughter to answer you. But I will reply for her, and in a manner which you cannot dispute. You desire to know whether Lucy Ashton, of her own free-will, desires to annul the engagement into which she has been trepanned. You have her letter under her own hand, demanding the surrender of it; and, in yet more full evidence of her purpose, here is the contract which she has this morning subscribed in presence of this reverend gentleman, with Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw."

Ravenswood gazed upon the deed, as if petrified. "And it was without fraud or compulsion," said he, looking towards the clergyman, "that Miss Ashton subscribed this parchment?"

"I vouch it, upon my sacred character."

"This is indeed, madam, an undeniable piece of evidence," said Ravenswood sternly; "and it will be equally unnecessary and dishonourable to waste another word in useless remonstrance or reproach. There, madam," he said, laying down before Lucy the signed paper, and the broken piece of gold—"there are the evidences of your first engagement; may you be more faithful to that which you have just formed. I will trouble you to return the corresponding tokens of my ill-placed confidence—I ought rather to say of my egregious folly."

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Lucy returned the scornful glance of her lover with a gaze, from which perception seemed to have been banished; yet she seemed partly to have understood his meaning, for she raised her hands as if to undo a blue ribbon which she wore around her neck. She was unable to accomplish her purpose, but Lady Ashton cut the ribbon asunder, and detached the broken piece of gold, which Miss Ashton had till then worn concealed in her bosom; the written counterpart of the lovers' engagement she for some time had had in her own possession. With a haughty curtsy, she delivered both to Ravenswood, who was much softened when he took the piece of gold.

"And she could wear it thus," he said, speaking to himself—"could wear it in her very bosom—could wear it next to her heart—even when—but complaint avails not," he said, dashing from his eye the tear which had gathered in it, and resuming the stern composure of his manner. He strode to the chimney, and threw into the fire the paper and piece of gold, stamping upon the coals with the heel of his boot, as if to ensure their destruction. "I will be no longer," he then said, "an intruder here—Your evil wishes, and your worse offices, Lady Ashton, I will only return, by hoping these will be your last machinations against your daughter's honour and happiness.—And to you, madam," he said, addressing Lucy, "I have nothing farther to say, except to pray to God that you may not become a world's wonder for this act of wilful and deliberate perjury." Having uttered these words, he turned on his heel, and left the apartment.

Sir William Ashton, by entreaty and authority, had detained his son and Bucklaw in a distant part of the castle, in order to prevent their again meeting with Ravenswood; but as the Master descended the great staircase, Lockhard delivered him a billet, signed Sholto Douglas Ashton, requesting to know where the Master of Ravenswood would be heard of four or five days from hence, as the writer had business of weight to settle with him, so soon as an important family event had taken place.

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"Tell Colonel Ashton," said Ravenswood, composedly, "I shall be found at Wolf's Crag when his leisure serves him."

As he descended the outward stair which led from the terrace, he was a second time interrupted by Craigengelt, who, on the part of his principal, the Laird of Bucklaw, expressed a hope, that Ravenswood would not leave Scotland within ten days at least, as he had both former and recent civilities for which to express his gratitude.

"Tell your master," said Ravenswood, fiercely, "to choose his own time. He will find me at Wolf's Crag, if his purpose is not forestalled."

"*My* master?" replied Craigengelt, encouraged by seeing Colonel Ashton and Bucklaw at the bottom of the terrace; "give me leave to say, I know of no such person upon earth, nor will I permit such language to be used to me."

"Seek your master, then, in hell!" exclaimed Ravenswood, giving way to the passion he had hitherto restrained, and throwing Craigengelt from him with such violence, that he rolled down the steps, and lay senseless at the foot of them—"I am a fool," he instantly added, "to vent my passion upon a caitiff so worthless."

He then mounted his horse, which at his arrival he had secured to a balustrade in front of the castle, rode very slowly past Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, raising his hat as he past each, and looking in their faces steadily while he offered this mute salutation, which was returned by both with the same stern gravity. Ravenswood walked on with equal deliberation until he reached the head of the avenue, as if to show that he rather courted than avoided interruption. When he had passed the upper gate, he turned his horse, and looked at the castle with a fixed eye; then set spurs to his good steed, and departed with the speed of a demon dismissed by the exorcist.

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CHAPTER V.

Who comes from the bridal chamber?
It is Azrael, the angel of death.
Thalaba.

After the dreadful scene that had taken place at the castle, Lucy was transported to her own chamber, where she remained for some time in a state of absolute stupor. Yet afterwards, in the course of the ensuing day, she seemed to have recovered, not merely her spirits and resolution but a sort of flighty levity, that was foreign to her character and situation, and which was at times chequered by fits of deep silence and melancholy, and of capricious pettishness. Lady Ashton became much alarmed, and consulted the family physicians. But as her pulse indicated no change, they could only say that the disease was on the spirits, and recommended gentle exercise and amusement. Miss Ashton never alluded to what had passed in the state-room. It seemed doubtful even if she was conscious of it, for she was often observed to raise her hands to her neck, as if in search of the ribbon that had been taken from it, and mutter, in surprise and discontent, when she could not find it, "It was the link that bound me to life."

Notwithstanding all these remarkable symptoms, Lady Ashton was too deeply pledged, to delay her daughter's marriage even in her present state of health. It cost her much trouble to keep up the fair side of appearances towards Bucklaw. She was well aware, that if he once saw any reluctance on her daughter's part, he would break off the treaty, to her great personal shame and dishonour. She therefore resolved, that, if Lucy continued passive, the marriage should take place upon the day that had been previously fixed, trusting that a change of place, of situation, and of character, would operate a more speedy and

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effectual cure upon the unsettled spirits of her daughter, than could be attained by the slow measures which the medical men recommended. Sir William Ashton's views of family aggrandizement, and his desire to strengthen himself against the measures of the Marquis of A——, readily induced him to acquiesce in what he could not have perhaps resisted, if willing to do so. As for the young men, Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, they protested, that, after what had happened, it would be most dishonourable to postpone for a single hour the time appointed for the marriage, as it would be generally ascribed to their being intimidated by the intrusive visit and threats of Ravenswood.

Bucklaw would indeed have been incapable of such precipitation, had he been aware of the state of Miss Ashton's health, or rather of her mind. But custom, upon these occasions, permitted only brief and sparing intercourse between the bridegroom and the betrothed; a circumstance so well improved by Lady Ashton, that Bucklaw neither saw nor suspected the real state of the health and feelings of his unhappy bride.

On the eve of the bridal day, Lucy appeared to have one of her fits of levity, and surveyed with a degree of girlish interest the various preparations of dress, &c. &c., which the different members of the family had prepared for the occasion.

The morning dawned bright and cheerily. The bridal guests assembled in gallant troops from distant quarters. Not only the relations of Sir William Ashton, and the still more dignified connexions of his lady, together with the numerous kinsmen and allies of the bridegroom, were present upon this joyful ceremony, gallantly mounted, arrayed, and caparisoned, but almost every presbyterian family of distinction, within fifty miles, made a point of attendance upon an occasion, which was considered as giving a sort of triumph over the Marquis of A——, in the person of his kinsman. Splendid refreshments awaited the guests on their arrival, and, after these were finished, the cry was to horse. The bride was led forth betwixt

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her brother Henry and her mother. Her gaiety of the preceding day had given rise to a deep shade of melancholy, which, however, did not misbecome an occasion so momentous. There was a light in her eyes, and a colour in her cheek, which had not been kindled for many a day, and which, joined to her great beauty, and the splendour of her dress, occasioned her entrance to be greeted with an universal murmur of applause, in which even the ladies could not refrain from joining. While the cavalcade were getting to horse, Sir William Ashton, a man of peace and of form, censured his son Henry for having begirt himself with a military sword of preposterous length, belonging to his brother, Colonel Ashton.

"If you must have a weapon," he said, "upon such a peaceful occasion, why did you not use the short poniard sent from Edinburgh on purpose?"

The boy vindicated himself, by saying it was lost.

"You put it out of the way yourself, I suppose," said his father, "out of ambition to wear that preposterous thing which might have served Sir William Wallace—but never mind, get to horse now, and take care of your sister."

The boy did so, and was placed in the centre of the gallant train. At the time, he was too full of his own appearance, his sword, his laced cloak, his feathered hat, and his managed horse, to pay much regard to anything else; but he afterwards remembered to the hour of his death, that when the hand of his sister, by which she supported herself on the pillion behind him, touched his own, it felt as wet and cold as sepulchral marble.

Glancing wide over hill and dale, the fair bridal procession at last reached the parish church, which they nearly filled; for, besides domestics, above a hundred gentlemen and ladies were present upon the occasion. The marriage ceremony was performed, according to the rites of the presbyterian persuasion, to which Bucklaw of late had judged it proper to conform.

On the outside of the church, a liberal dole was distributed to the poor of the neighbouring parishes, under the direction of Johnnie Mortheuch, who had lately been

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promoted from his desolate quarters at the Hermitage, to fill the more eligible situation of sexton at the parish church of Ravenswood. Dame Gourlay, with two of her contemporaries, the same who assisted at Alice's late-wake, seated apart upon a flat monument, or *through-stane*, sat enviously comparing the shares which had been allotted to them in dividing the dole.

"Johnnie Mortheuch," said Annie Winnie, "might hae minded auld lang syne, and thought of his auld kimmers, for as braw as he is with his new black coat. I hae gotten but five herring instead o' sax, and this disna look like a gude saxpennys, and I dare say this bit morsel o' beef is an unce lighter than ony that's been dealt round; and it's a bit o' the tenony hough, mair by token, that your's, Maggie, is out o' the back sey."

"Mine, quo' she?" mumbled the paralytic hag, "mine is half banes, I trow. If grit folk gie poor bodies ony thing for coming to their weddings and burials, it suld be something that wad do them gude, I think."

"Their gifts," said Ailsie Gourlay, "are dealt for nae love of us, nor out of respect for whether we feed or starve. They wad gie us whinstanes for loaves, if it would serve their ain vanity, and yet they expect us to be as gratefu', as they ca' it, as if they served us for true love and liking."

"And that's truly said," answered her companion.

"But, Ailsie Gourlay, ye're the auldest o' us three, did ye ever see a mair grand bridal?"

"I winna say that I have," answered the hag; "but I think soon to see as braw a burial."

"And that wad please me as weel," said Annie Winnie; "for there's as large a dole, and folk are no obliged to girn and laugh, and mak murgeons, and wish joy to these hellicat quality, that lord it ower us like brute beasts. I like to pack the dead dole in my lap, and rin ower my auld rhyme,—

> 'My loaf in my lap, my penny in my purse,
> Thou art ne'er the better, and I'm ne'er the worse.'"[1]

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"That's right, Annie," said the paralytic woman; "God send us a green Yule and a fat kirk-yard!"

"But I wad like to ken, Lucky Gourlay, for ye're the auldest and wisest amang us, whilk o' these revellers' turns it will be to be streekit first?"

"D'ye see yon dandilly maiden," said dame Gourlay, "a' glistenin' wi' goud and jewels, that they are lifting up on the white horse behind that hair-brained callant in scarlet, wi' the lang sword at his side?"

"But that's the bride!" said her companion, her cold heart touched with some sort of compassion; "that's the very bride hersell! Eh, whow! sae young, sae braw and sae bonnie—and is her time sae short?"

"I tell ye," said the sibyl, "her winding sheet is up as high as her throat already, believe it wha list. Her sand has but few grains to rin out, and nae wonder—they've been weel shaken. The leaves are withering fast on the trees, but she'll never see the Martinmas wind gar them dance in swirls like the fairy rings."

"Ye waited on her for a quarter," said the paralytic woman, "and got twa red pieces, or I am far beguiled."

"Ay, ay," answered Ailsie, with a bitter grin; "and Sir William Ashton promised me a bonnie red gown to the boot o' that—a stake, and a chain, and a tar barrel, lass!—what think ye o' that for a propine?—for being up early and doun late for fourscore nights and mair wi' his dwining daughter. But he may keep it for his ain leddy, cummers."

"I hae heard a sough," said Annie Winnie, "as if Leddy Ashton was nae canny body."

"D'ye see her yonder," said dame Gourlay, "as she prances on her grey gelding out at the kirk-yard?—there's mair o' utter deevilry in that woman, as brave and fair-fashioned as she rides yonder, than in a' the Scotch witches that ever flew by moonlight ower North-Berwick Law."

"What's that ye say about witches, ye damned hags?" said Johnnie Mortheuch; "are ye casting ye're cantrips in the very kirk-yard, to mischieve the bride and bride-

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groom ? Get awa hame, for if I tak my souple t'ye, I'll gar ye find the road faster than ye wad like."

"Hech, sirs!" answered Ailsie Gourlay, "how bra' are we wi' our new black coat and our weel-pouthered head, as if we had never kend hunger nor thirst oursells !—and we'll be screwing up our bit fiddle, doubtless, in the ha' the night, amang a' the other elbo'-jiggers for miles round. Let's see if the pins haud, Johnnie—that's a', lad."

"I take ye a' to witness, gude people," said Mortheuch, "that she threatens me wi' mischief, and forespeaks me. If ony thing but gude happens to me or my fiddle this night, I'll make it the blackest night's job she ever stirred in. I'll hae her before Presbytery and Synod—I'm half a minister mysell, now that I'm a bedral in an inhabited parish."

Although the mutual hatred betwixt these hags and the rest of mankind had steeled their hearts against all impressions of festivity, this was by no means the case with the multitude at large. The splendour of the bridal retinue—the gay dresses—the spirited horses—the blithesome appearance of the handsome women and gallant gentlemen assembled upon the occasion, had the usual effect upon the minds of the populace. The repeated shouts of "Ashton and Bucklaw for ever !"—the discharge of pistols, guns, and musketoons, to give what was called the bridal-shot, evinced the interest the people took in the occasion of the cavalcade, as they accompanied it upon their return to the castle. If there was here and there an elder peasant or his wife who sneered at the pomp of the upstart family, and remembered the days of the long-descended Ravenswoods, even they, attracted by the plentiful cheer which the castle that day afforded to rich and poor, held their way thither, and acknowledged, notwithstanding their prejudices, the influence of *l'Amphitrion où l'on dine*.

Thus accompanied with the attendance both of rich and poor, Lucy returned to her father's house. Bucklaw used his privilege of riding next to the bride, but, new to such a situation, rather endeavoured to attract attention by the

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display of his person and horsemanship, than by any attempt to address her in private. They reached the castle in safety, amid a thousand joyous acclamations.

It is well known that the weddings of ancient days were celebrated with a festive publicity rejected by the delicacy of modern times. The marriage-guests on the present occasion were regaled with a banquet of unbounded profusion, the relics of which, after the domestics had feasted in their turn, were distributed among the shouting crowd, with as many barrels of ale, as made the hilarity without correspond to that within the castle. The gentlemen, according to the fashion of the times, indulged, for the most part, in deep draughts of the richest wines, while the ladies, prepared for the ball which always closed a bridal entertainment, impatiently expected their arrival in the state gallery. At length the social party broke up at a late hour and the gentlemen crowded into the saloon, where, enlivened by wine and the joyful occasion, they laid aside their swords, and handed their impatient partners to the floor. The music already rung from the gallery, along the fretted roof of the ancient state apartment. According to strict etiquette, the bride ought to have opened the ball, but Lady Ashton, making an apology on account of her daughter's health, offered her own hand to Bucklaw as substitute for her daughter's.

But as Lady Ashton raised her head gracefully, expecting the strain at which she was to begin the dance, she was so much struck by an unexpected alteration in the ornaments of the apartment, that she was surprised into an exclamation,—"Who has dared to change the pictures?"

All looked up, and those who knew the usual state of the apartment, observed, with surprise, that the picture of Sir William Ashton's father was removed from its place, and in its stead that of old Sir Malise Ravenswood seemed to frown wrath and vengeance upon the party assembled below. The exchange must have been made while the apartments were empty, but had not been observed until the torches and lights in the sconces were kindled

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for the ball. The haughty and heated spirits of the gentlemen led them to demand an immediate inquiry into the cause of what they deemed an affront to their host and to themselves; but Lady Ashton, recovering herself, passed it over as the freak of a crazy wench who was maintained about the castle, and whose susceptible imagination had been observed to be much affected by the stories which Dame Gourlay delighted to tell concerning "the former family," so Lady Ashton named the Ravenswoods. The obnoxious picture was immediately removed, and the ball was opened by Lady Ashton, with a grace and dignity which supplied the charms of youth, and almost verified the extravagant encomiums of the elder part of the company, who extolled her performance as far exceeding the dancing of the rising generation.

When Lady Ashton sat down, she was not surprised to find that her daughter had left the apartment, and she herself followed, eager to obviate any impression which might have been made upon her nerves by an incident so likely to affect them as the mysterious transposition of the portraits. Apparently she found her apprehensions groundless, for she returned in about an hour, and whispered the bridegroom, who extricated himself from the dancers, and vanished from the apartment. The instruments now played their loudest strains—the dancers pursued their exercise with all the enthusiasm inspired by youth, mirth, and high spirits, when a cry was heard so shrill and piercing, as at once to arrest the dance and the music. All stood motionless; but when the yell was again repeated, Colonel Ashton snatched a torch from the sconce, and demanding the key of the bridal-chamber from Henry, to whom, as bride's-man, it had been intrusted, rushed thither, followed by Sir William and Lady Ashton, and one or two others, near relations of the family. The bridal guests waited their return in stupified amazement.

Arrived at the door of the apartment, Colonel Ashton knocked and called, but received no answer, except stifled groans. He hesitated no longer to open the door of the apartment, in which he found opposition, from some-

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thing which lay against it. When he had succeeded in opening it, the body of the bridegroom was found lying on the threshold of the bridal-chamber, and all around was flooded with blood. A cry of surprise and horror was raised by all present; and the company, excited by this new alarm, began to rush tumultuously towards the sleeping apartment. Colonel Ashton, first whispering to his mother,—"Search for her—she has murdered him!" drew his sword, planted himself in the passage, and declared he would suffer no man to pass excepting the clergyman, and the medical person present. By their assistance, Bucklaw, who still breathed, was raised from the ground, and transported to another apartment, where his friends, full of suspicion and murmuring, assembled round him to learn the opinion of the surgeon.

In the meanwhile, Lady Ashton, her husband, and their assistants, in vain sought Lucy in the bridal bed and in the chamber. There was no private passage from the room, and they began to think that she must have thrown herself from the window, when one of the company, holding his torch lower than the rest, discovered something white in the corner of the great old-fashioned chimney of the apartment. Here they found the unfortunate girl, seated, or rather couched like a hare upon its form—her head-gear dishevelled; her night-clothes torn and dabbled with blood,—her eyes glazed, and her features convulsed into a wild paroxysm of insanity. When she saw herself discovered, she gibbered, made mouths, and pointed at them with her bloody fingers, with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac.

Female assistance was now hastily summoned; the unhappy bride was overpowered, not without the use of some force. As they carried her over the threshold, she looked down, and uttered the only articulate words that she had yet spoken, saying, with a sort of grinning exultation, —"So, you have ta'en up your bonnie bridegroom?" She was by the shuddering assistants conveyed to another and more retired apartment, where she was secured as her situation required, and closely watched. The unutterable

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agony of the parents—the horror and confusion of all who were in the castle—the fury of contending passions between the friends of the different parties, passions augmented by previous intemperance, surpass description.

The surgeon was the first who obtained something like a patient hearing; he pronounced that the wound of Bucklaw, though severe and dangerous, was by no means fatal, but might readily be rendered so by disturbance and hasty removal. This silenced the numerous party of Bucklaw's friends, who had previously insisted that he should at all rates, be transported from the castle to the nearest of their houses. They still demanded, however, that, in consideration of what had happened, four of their number should remain to watch over the sick-bed of their friend, and that a suitable number of their domestics, well armed, should also remain in the castle. This condition being acceded to on the part of Colonel Ashton and his father, the rest of the bridegroom's friends left the castle, notwithstanding the hour and the darkness of the night. The cares of the medical man were next employed in behalf of Miss Ashton, whom he pronounced to be in a very dangerous state. Farther medical assistance was immediately summoned. All night she remained delirious. On the morning, she fell into a state of absolute insensibility. The next evening, the physician said, would be the crisis of her malady. It proved so, for although she awoke from her trance with some appearance of calmness, and suffered her night-clothes to be changed, or put in order, yet so soon as she put her hand to her neck, as if to search for the fatal blue ribbon, a tide of recollections seemed to rush upon her, which her mind and body were alike incapable of bearing. Convulsion followed convulsion, till they closed in death, without her being able to utter a word explanatory of the fatal scene.

The provincial judge of the district arrived the day after the young lady had expired, and executed, though with all possible delicacy to the afflicted family the painful duty of inquiring into this fatal transaction. But there occurred nothing to explain the general hypothesis, that the

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bride, in a sudden fit of insanity, had stabbed the bridegroom at the threshold of the apartment. The fatal weapon was found in the chamber, smeared with blood. It was the same poniard which Henry should have worn on the wedding-day, and which his unhappy sister had probably contrived to secrete on the preceding evening, when it had been shown to her among other articles of preparation for the wedding.

The friends of Bucklaw expected that on his recovery he would throw some light upon this dark story, and eagerly pressed him with inquiries, which for some time he evaded under pretext of weakness. When, however, he had been transported to his own house, and was considered as in a state of convalescence, he assembled those persons, both male and female, who had considered themselves as entitled to press him on this subject, and returned them thanks for the interest they had exhibited in his behalf, and their offers of adherence and support. "I wish you all," he said, "my friends, to understand, however, that I have neither story to tell, nor injuries to avenge. If a lady shall question me henceforward upon the incidents of that unhappy night, I shall remain silent, and in future consider her as one who has shown herself desirous to break off her friendship with me; in a word, I will never speak to her again. But if a gentleman shall ask me the same question, I shall regard the incivility as equivalent to an invitation to meet him in the Duke's Walk,[2] and I expect that he will rule himself accordingly."

A declaration so decisive admitted no commentary; and it was soon after seen that Bucklaw had arisen from the bed of sickness a sadder and a wiser man than he had hitherto shown himself. He dismissed Craigengelt from his society, but not without such a provision as, if well employed, might secure him against indigence, and against temptation.

Bucklaw afterwards went abroad, and never returned to Scotland; nor was he known ever to hint at the circumstances attending his fatal marriage. By many readers this may be deemed overstrained, romantic, and

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composed by the wild imagination of an author, desirous of gratifying the popular appetite for the horrible; but those who are read in the private family history of Scotland during the period in which the scene is laid, will readily discover, through the disguise of borrowed names and added incidents, the leading particulars of AN OWER TRUE TALE.

CHAPTER VI.

Whose mind's so marbled, and his heart so hard,
That would not, when this huge mishap was heard,
To th' utmost note of sorrow set their song,
To see a gallant, with so great a grace,
So suddenly unthought on, so o'erthrown,
And so to perish, in so poor a place,
By too rash riding in a ground unknown!

Poem, in Nisbet's Heraldry, Vol. II.

We have anticipated the course of time to mention Bucklaw's recovery and fate, that we might not interrupt the detail of events which succeeded the funeral of the unfortunate Lucy Ashton. This melancholy ceremony was performed in the misty dawn of an autumnal morning, with such moderate attendance and ceremony as could not possibly be dispensed with. A very few of the nearest relations attended her body to the same churchyard to which she had so lately been led as a bride, with as little free will, perhaps, as could be now testified by her lifeless and passive remains. An aisle adjacent to the church had been fitted up by Sir William Ashton as a family cemetery; and here, in a coffin bearing neither name nor date, were consigned to dust the remains of what was once lovely, beautiful, and innocent, though exasperated to frenzy by a long tract of unremitting persecution. While the mourners were busy in the vault, the three village hags, who, notwithstanding the unwonted

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earliness of the hour, had snuffed the carrion like vultures, were seated on the "through-stane," and engaged in their wonted unhallowed conference.

"Did not I say," said dame Gourlay, "that the braw bridal would be followed by as braw a funeral?"

"I think," answered dame Winnie, "there's little bravery at it; neither meat nor drink, and just a wheen silver tippences to the poor folk; it was little worth while to come sae far road for sae sma' profit, and us sae frail."

"Out, wretch!" replied dame Gourlay, "can a' the dainties they could gie us be half sae sweet as this hour's vengeance? There they are that were capering on their prancing nags four days since, and they are now ganging as dreigh and sober as oursells the day. They were a' glistening wi' gowd and silver—they're now as black as the crook. And Miss Lucy Ashton, that grudged when an honest woman came near her, a taed may sit on her coffin the day, and she can never scunner when he croaks. And Lady Ashton has hell-fire burning in her breast by this time; and Sir William, wi' his gibbets, and his faggots, and his chains, how likes he the witcheries of his ain dwelling-house?"

"And is it true, then," mumbled the paralytic wretch, "that the bride was trailed out of her bed and up the chimley by evil spirits, and that the bridegroom's face was wrung round ahint him?"

"Ye needna care wha did it, or how it was done," said Ailsie Gourlay; "but I'll uphaud it for nae sticket[3] job, and that the lairds and ladies ken weel this day."

"And was it true," said Annie Winnie, "sin ye ken sae mickle about it, that the picture of auld Sir Malise Ravenswood came down on the ha' floor, and led out the brawl before them a'?"

"Na," said Ailsie; "but into the ha' came the picture—and I ken weel how it came there—to gie them a warning that pride would get a fa'. But there's as queer a ploy, cummers, as ony o' thae, that's gaun on even now in the burial vault yonder—ye saw twal' mourners, wi' crape and cloke, gang down the steps pair and pair?"

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"What should ail us to see them?" said the one old woman.

"I counted them," said the other, with the eagerness of a person to whom the spectacle had afforded too much interest to be viewed with indifference.

"But ye did not see," said Ailsie, exulting in her superior observation, "that there's a thirteenth amang them that they ken naething about; and, if auld freets say true, there's ane o' that company that'll no be lang for this warld. But come awa, cummers; if we bide here, I'se warrant we get the wyte o' whatever ill comes of it; and that gude will come of it nane o' them need ever think to see."

And thus, croaking like the ravens when they anticipate pestilence, the ill-boding sibyls withdrew from the churchyard.

In fact, the mourners, when the service of interment was ended, discovered that there was among them one more than the invited number, and the remark was communicated in whispers to each other. The suspicion fell upon a figure, which, muffled in the same deep mourning with the others, was reclined, almost in a state of insensibility, against one of the pillars of the sepulchral vault. The relatives of the Ashton family were expressing in whispers their surprise and displeasure at the intrusion, when they were interrupted by Colonel Ashton, who, in his father's absence, acted as principal mourner. "I know," he said in a whisper, "who this person is; he has, or shall soon have, as deep cause of mourning as ourselves—leave me to deal with him, and do not disturb the ceremony by unnecessary exposure." So saying, he separated himself from the group of his relations, and taking the unknown mourner by the cloak, he said to him, in a tone of suppressed emotion, "Follow me."

The stranger, as if starting from a trance at the sound of his voice, mechanically obeyed, and they ascended the broken ruinous stair which led from the sepulchre into the church-yard. The other mourners followed, but remained grouped together at the door of the vault, watch-

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ing with anxiety the motions of Colonel Ashton and the stranger, who now appeared to be in close conference beneath the shade of a yew-tree, in the most remote part of the burial-ground.

To this sequestered spot Colonel Ashton had guided the stranger, and then, turning round, addressed him in a stern and composed tone—"I cannot doubt that I speak to the Master of Ravenswood?" No answer was returned. "I cannot doubt," resumed the Colonel, trembling with rising passion, "that I speak to the murderer of my sister?"

"You have named me but too truly," said Ravenswood, in a hollow and tremulous voice.

"If you repent what you have done," said the Colonel, "may your penitence avail you before God; with me it shall serve you nothing. Here," he said, giving a paper, "is the measure of my sword, and a memorandum of the time and place of meeting. Sun-rise to-morrow-morning, on the Links to the east of Wolf's-hope."

The Master of Ravenswood held the paper in his hand, and seemed irresolute. At length he spoke—"Do not," he said, "urge to farther desperation a wretch who is already desperate. Enjoy your life while you can, and let me seek my death from another."

"That you never, never shall!" said Douglas Ashton. "You shall die by my hand, or you shall complete the ruin of my family by taking my life. If you refuse my open challenge, there is no advantage I will not take of you, no indignity with which I will not load you, until the very name of Ravenswood shall be the sign of everything that is dishonourable, as it is already of all that is villanous."

"That it shall never be," said Ravenswood, fiercely; "if I am the last who must bear it, I owe it to those who once owned it, that the name shall be extinguished without infamy. I accept your challenge, time, and place of meeting. We meet, I presume, alone?"

"Alone we meet," said Colonel Ashton, "and alone will the survivor of us return from that place of rendezvous."

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"Then God have mercy on the soul of him who falls!" said Ravenswood.

"So be it!" said Colonel Ashton; "so far can my charity reach even for the man I hate most deadly, and with the deepest reason. Now, break off, for we shall be interrupted. The links by the sea-shore to the east of Wolf's-hope—the hour sun-rise—our swords our only weapons."

"Enough," said the Master; "I will not fail you."

They separated; Colonel Ashton joining the rest of the mourners, and the Master of Ravenswood taking his horse, which was tied to a tree behind the church. Colonel Ashton returned to the castle with the funeral guests, but found a pretext for detaching himself from them in the evening, when, changing his dress to a riding-habit, he rode to Wolf's-hope that night, and took up his abode in the little inn, in order that he might be ready for his rendezvous in the morning.

It is not known how the Master of Ravenswood disposed of the rest of that unhappy day. Late at night, however, he arrived at Wolf's Crag, and aroused his old domestic, Caleb Balderstone, who had ceased to expect his return. Confused and flying rumours of the late tragical death of Miss Ashton, and of its mysterious cause, had already reached the old man, who was filled with the utmost anxiety, on account of the probable effect these events might produce upon the mind of his master.

The conduct of Ravenswood did not alleviate his apprehensions. To the butler's trembling entreaties, that he would take some refreshment, he at first returned no answer, and then suddenly and fiercely demanding wine, he drank, contrary to his habits, a very large draught. Seeing that his master would eat nothing, the old man affectionately entreated that he would permit him to light him to his chamber. It was not until the request was three or four times repeated, that Ravenswood made a mute sign of compliance. But when Balderstone conducted him to an apartment which had been comfortably

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fitted up, and which, since his return, he had usually occupied, Ravenswood stopped short on the threshold.

"Not here," said he, sternly; "show me the room in which my father died; the room in which SHE slept the night they were at the castle."

"Who, sir?" said Caleb, too terrified to preserve his presence of mind."

"*She*, Lucy Ashton!—would you kill me, old man, by forcing me to repeat her name?"

Caleb would have said something of the disrepair of the chamber, but was silenced by the irritable impatience which was expressed in his master's countenance; he lighted the way, trembling and in silence, placed the lamp on the table of the deserted room, and was about to attempt some arrangement of the bed, when his master bid him begone in a tone that admitted of no delay. The old man retired, not to rest, but to prayer; and from time to time crept to the door of the apartment, in order to find out whether Ravenswood had gone to repose. His measured heavy step upon the floor was only interrupted by deep groans; and the repeated stamps of the heel of his heavy boot, intimated too clearly, that the wretched inmate was abandoning himself at such moments to paroxysms of uncontrolled agony. The old man thought that the morning, for which he longed, would never have dawned; but time, whose course rolls on with equal current, however it may seem more rapid or more slow to mortal apprehension, brought the dawn at last, and spread a ruddy light on the broad verge of the glistening ocean. It was early in November, and the weather was serene for the season of the year. But an easterly wind had prevailed during the night, and the advancing tide rolled nearer than usual to the foot of the crags on which the castle was founded.

With the first peep of light, Caleb Balderstone again resorted to the door of Ravenswood's sleeping apartment; through a chink of which he observed him engaged in measuring the length of two or three swords which lay in a closet adjoining to the apartment. He muttered to

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himself, as he selected one of these weapons, "It is shorter—let him have this advantage as he has every other."

Caleb Balderstone knew too well, from what he witnessed, upon what enterprize his master was bound, and how vain all interference on his part must necessarily prove. He had but time to retreat from the door, so nearly was he surprised by his master suddenly coming out, and descending to the stables. The faithful domestic followed, and from the dishevelled appearance of his master's dress, and his ghastly looks, was confirmed in his conjecture that he had passed the night without sleep or repose. He found him busily engaged in saddling his horse, a service from which Caleb, though with faltering voice and trembling hands, offered to relieve him. Ravenswood rejected his assistance by a mute sign, and having led the animal into the court, was just about to mount him, when the old domestic's fear giving way to the strong attachment which was the principal passion of his mind, he flung himself suddenly at Ravenswood's feet, and clasped his knees, while he exclaimed, "Oh, sir! oh, master! kill me if you will, but do not go out on this dreadful errand! O! my dear master, wait but this day—the Marquis of A—— comes to-morrow, and a' will be remedied."

"You have no longer a master, Caleb," said Ravenswood, endeavouring to extricate himself; "why, old man, would you cling to a falling tower?"

"But I *have* a master," cried Caleb, still holding him fast, "while the heir of Ravenswood breathes. I am but a servant; but I was born your father's—your grandfather's servant—I was born for the family—I have lived for them—I would die for them!—Stay but at home, and all will be well!"

"Well, fool! well?" said Ravenswood; "vain old man, nothing hereafter in life will be well with me, and happiest is the hour that shall soonest close it!"

So saying, he extricated himself from the old man's hold, threw himself on his horse, and rode out at the

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gate; but instantly turning back, he threw towards Caleb, who hastened to meet him, a heavy purse of gold.

"Caleb!" he said, with a ghastly smile, "I make you my executor;" and again turning his bridle, he resumed his course down the hill.

The gold fell unheeded on the pavement, for the old man ran to observe the course which was taken by his master, who turned to the left down a small and broken path, which gained the sea-shore through a cleft in the rock, and led to a sort of cove, where, in former times, the boats of the castle were wont to be moored. Observing him take this course, Caleb hastened to the eastern battlement, which commanded the prospect of the whole sands, very near as far as the village of Wolf's-hope. He could easily see his master riding in that direction, as fast as the horse could carry him. The prophecy at once rushed on Balderstone's mind, that the Lord of Ravenswood should perish on the Kelpie's Flow, which lay half way betwixt the tower and the links or sand-knolls, to the northward of Wolf's-hope. He saw him accordingly reach the fatal spot, but he never saw him pass further.

Colonel Ashton, frantic for revenge, was already in the field, pacing the turf with eagerness, and looking with impatience towards the tower for the arrival of his antagonist. The sun had now risen, and showed its broad disk above the eastern sea, so that he could easily discern the horseman who rode towards him with speed which argued impatience equal to his own. At once the figure became invisible, as if it had melted into the air. He rubbed his eyes, as if he had witnessed an apparition, and then hastened to the spot, near which he was met by Balderstone, who came from the opposite direction. No trace whatever of horse or rider could be discerned; it only appeared, that the late winds and high tides had greatly extended the usual bounds of the quicksand, and that the unfortunate horseman, as appeared from the hoof-tracks, in his precipitated haste, had not attended to keep on the firm sands on the foot of the rock, but had

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taken the shortest and most dangerous course. One only vestige of his fate appeared. A large sable feather had been detached from his hat, and the rippling waves of the rising tide wafted it to Caleb's feet. The old man took it up, dried it, and placed it in his bosom.

The inhabitants of Wolf's-hope were now alarmed, and crowded to the place, some on shore, and some in boats, but their search availed nothing. The tenacious depths of the quicksand, as is usual in such cases, retained its prey.

Our tale draws to a conclusion. The Marquis of A——, alarmed at the frightful reports that were current, and anxious for his kinsman's safety, arrived on the subsequent day to mourn his loss; and, after renewing in vain a search for the body, returned to forget what had happened amid the bustle of politics and state affairs.

Not so Caleb Balderstone. If worldly profit could have consoled the old man, his age was better provided for than his earlier years had ever been; but life had lost to him its salt and its savour. His whole course of ideas, his feelings, whether of pride or of apprehension, of pleasure or of pain, had all arisen from his close connection with the family which was now extinguished. He held up his head no longer—forsook all his usual haunts and occupations, and seemed only to find pleasure in moping about those apartments in the old castle, which the Master of Ravenswood had last inhabited. He ate without refreshment, and slumbered without repose; and, with a fidelity sometimes displayed by the canine race, but seldom by human beings, he pined and died within a year after the catastrophe which we have narrated.

The family of Ashton did not long survive that of Ravenswood. Sir William Ashton outlived his eldest son, the Colonel, who was slain in a duel in Flanders; and Henry, by whom he was succeeded, died unmarried. Lady Ashton lived to the verge of extreme old age, the only survivor of the group of unhappy persons, whose misfortunes were owing to her implacability. That she

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might internally feel compunction, and reconcile herself with heaven whom she had offended, we will not, and we dare not, deny ; but to those around her, she did not evince the slightest symptom either of repentance or remorse. In all external appearance, she bore the same bold, haughty, unbending character, which she had displayed before these unhappy events. A splendid marble monument records her name, title, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph.

END OF THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

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A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

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A LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE REVISED EDITION.

THE LEGEND OF MONTROSE was written chiefly with a view to place before the reader the melancholy fate of John Lord Kilpont, eldest son of William Earl of Airth and Menteith, and the singular circumstances attending the birth and history of James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, by whose hand the unfortunate nobleman fell.

Our subject leads us to talk of deadly feuds, and we must begin with one still more ancient than that to which our story relates. During the reign of James IV., a great feud between the powerful families of Drummond and Murray divided Perthshire. The former, being the most numerous and powerful, cooped up eight score of the Murrays in the kirk of Monivaird, and set fire to it. The wives and the children of the ill-fated men, who had also found shelter in the church, perished by the same conflagration. One man, named David Murray, escaped by the humanity of one of the Drummonds, who received him in his arms as he leaped from amongst the flames. As King James IV. ruled with more activity than most of his predecessors, this cruel deed was severely revenged, and several of the perpetrators were beheaded at Stirling. In consequence of the prosecution against his clan, the Drummond by whose assistance David Murray had escaped, fled to Ireland, until, by means of the person whose life he had saved, he was permitted to return

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to Scotland, where he and his descendants were distinguished by the name of Drummond-Eirinich, or Ernoch, that is, Drummond of Ireland; and the same title was bestowed on their estate.

The Drummond-ernoch of James the Sixth's time was a king's forester in the forest of Glenartney, and chanced to be employed there in search of venison about the year 1588, or early in 1589. This forest was adjacent to the chief haunts of the MacGregors, or a particular race of them, known by the title of MacEagh, or Children of the Mist. They considered the forester's hunting in their vicinity as an aggression, or perhaps they had him at feud, for the apprehension or slaughter of some of their own name, or for some similar reason. This tribe of MacGregors were outlawed and persecuted, as the reader may see in the Introduction to Rob Roy; and every man's hand being against them, their hand was of course directed against every man. In short, they surprised and slew Drummond-ernoch, cut off his head, and carried it with them, wrapt in the corner of one of their plaids.

In the full exultation of vengeance, they stopped at the house of Ardvoirlich and demanded refreshment, which the lady, a sister of the murdered Drummond-ernoch, (her husband being absent,) was afraid or unwilling to refuse. She caused bread and cheese to be placed before them, and gave directions for more substantial refreshments to be prepared. While she was absent with this hospitable intention, the barbarians placed the head of her brother on the table, filling the mouth with bread and cheese, and bidding him eat, for many a merry meal he had eaten in that house.

The poor woman returning, and beholding this dreadful sight, shrieked aloud, and fled into the woods, where, as described in the romance, she roamed a raving maniac, and for some time secreted herself from all living society. Some remaining instinctive feeling brought her at length to steal a glance from a distance at the maidens while they milked the cows, which being observed, her husband,

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Ardvoirlich, had her conveyed back to her home, and detained her there till she gave birth to a child, of whom she had been pregnant; after which she was observed gradually to recover her mental faculties.

Meanwhile the outlaws had carried to the utmost their insults against the regal authority, which indeed, as exercised, they had little reason for respecting. They bore the same bloody trophy, which they had so savagely exhibited to the lady of Ardvoirlich, into the old church of Balquidder, nearly in the centre of their country, where the Laird of MacGregor and all his clan being convened for the purpose, laid their hands successively on the dead man's head, and swore, in heathenish and barbarous manner, to defend the author of the deed. This fierce and vindictive combination gave the author's late and lamented friend, Sir Alexander Boswell, Bart., subject for a spirited poem, entitled "Clan-Alpin's Vow," which was printed, but not, I believe, published, in 1811.*

The fact is ascertained by a proclamation from the Privy Council, dated 4th February, 1589, directing letters of fire and sword against the MacGregors.† This fearful commission was executed with uncommon fury. The late excellent John Buchanan of Cambusmore showed the author some correspondence between his ancestor, the Laird of Buchanan, and Lord Drummond, about sweeping certain valleys with their followers, on a fixed time and rendezvous, and "taking sweet revenge for the death of their cousin, Drummond-ernoch." In spite of all, however, that could be done, the devoted tribe of MacGregor still bred up survivors to sustain and to inflict new cruelties and injuries.‡

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* See Appendix No. I.

† See Appendix No. II.

‡ I embrace the opportunity given me by a second mention of this tribe, to notice an error, which imputes to an individual named Ciar Mohr MacGregor, the slaughter of the students at the battle of Glenfruin. I am informed from the authority of John Gregorson, Esq., that the chieftain so named was dead nearly a century before the battle in question, and could not, therefore, have done the cruel action mentioned. The mistake does not rest with me, as I disclaimed being responsible for the tradition while I quoted

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Meanwhile young James Stewart of Ardvoirlich grew up to manhood uncommonly tall, strong, and active, with such power in the grasp of his hand in particular, as could force the blood from beneath the nails of the persons who contended with him in this feat of strength. His temper was moody, fierce, and irascible; yet he must have had some ostensible good qualities, as he was greatly beloved by Lord Kilpont, the eldest son of the Earl of Airth and Menteith.

This gallant young nobleman joined Montrose in the setting up his standard in 1644, just before the decisive battle at Tippermuir, on the 1st September in that year. At that time, Stewart of Ardvoirlich shared the confidence of the young Lord by day, and his bed by night, when, about four or five days after the battle, Ardvoirlich, either from a fit of sudden fury or deep malice long entertained against his unsuspecting friend, stabbed Lord Kilpont to the heart, and escaped from the camp of Montrose, having killed a sentinel who attempted to detain him. Bishop Guthrie gives as a reason for this villanous action, that Lord Kilpont had rejected with abhorrence a proposal of Ardvoirlich to assassinate Montrose. But it does not appear that there is any authority for this charge, which rests on mere suspicion. Ardvoirlich, the assassin, certainly did fly to the Covenanters, and was employed and promoted by them. He obtained a pardon for the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, confirmed by Parliament in 1644, and was made Major of Argyle's regiment in 1648.

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it, but with vulgar fame, which is always disposed to ascribe remarkable actions to a remarkable name.—See the erroneous passage, Rob Roy, Vol. I. Introduction, p. 10; and so soft sleep the offended phantom of Dugald Ciar Mohr.

It is with mingled pleasure and shame that I record the more important error, of having announced as deceased my learned acquaintance, the Rev. Dr. Grahame, minister of Aberfoil.—See Rob Roy, Vol. II., p. 105. I cannot now recollect the precise ground of my depriving my learned and excellent friend of his existence, unless, like Mr. Kirke, his predecessor in the parish, the excellent Doctor had made a short trip to Fairyland, with whose wonders he is so well acquainted. But however I may have been misled, my regret is most sincere for having spread such a rumour; and no one can be more gratified than I that the report, however I have been induced to credit and give it currency, is a false one, and that Dr. Grahame is still the living pastor of Aberfoil, for the delight and instruction of his brother antiquaries.

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Such are the facts of the tale, here given as a Legend of Montrose's wars. The reader will find they are considerably altered in the fictitious narrative.

The author has endeavoured to enliven the tragedy of the tale by the introduction of a personage proper to the time and country. In this he has been held by excellent judges to have been in some degree successful. The contempt of commerce entertained by young men having some pretence to gentility, the poverty of the country of Scotland, the national disposition to wandering and to adventure, all conduced to lead the Scots abroad into the military service of countries which were at war with each other. They were distinguished on the Continent by their bravery; but in adopting the trade of mercenary soldiers, they necessarily injured their national character. The tincture of learning, which most of them possessed, degenerated into pedantry; their good breeding became mere ceremonial; their fear of dishonour no longer kept them aloof from that which was really unworthy, but was made to depend on certain punctilious observances totally apart from that which was in itself deserving of praise. A cavalier of honour, in search of his fortune, might, for example, change his service as he would his shirt, fight, like the doughty Captain Dalgetty, in one cause after another, without regard to the justice of the quarrel, and might plunder the peasantry subjected to him by the fate of war with the most unrelenting rapacity; but he must beware how he sustained the slightest reproach, even from a clergyman, if it had regard to neglect on the score of duty. The following occurrence will prove the truth of what I mean:—

"Here I must not forget the memory of one preacher, Master William Forbesse, a preacher for souldiers, yea, and a captaine in neede to leade souldiers on a good occasion, being full of courage, with discretion and good conduct, beyond some captaines I have knowne, that were not so capable as he. At this time he not onely prayed for us, but went on with us, to remarke, as I thinke, men's carriage; and having found a sergeant neglecting

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his dutie and his honour at such a time, (whose name I will not expresse,) having chidden him, did promise to reveale him unto me, as he did after their service. The sergeant being called before me, and accused, did deny his accusation, alleaging, if he were no pastour that had alleaged it, he would not lie under the injury. The preacher offered to fight with him, [in proof] that it was truth he had spoken of him; whereupon I cashiered the sergeant, and gave his place to a worthier, called Mungo Gray, a gentleman of good worth, and of much courage. The sergeant being cashiered, never called Master William to account, for which he was evill thought of; so that he retired home, and quit the warres."

The above quotation is taken from a work which the author repeatedly consulted while composing the following sheets, and which is in great measure written in the humour of Captain Dugald Dalgetty. It bears the following formidable title :—" MONRO his Expedition with the worthy Scots Regiment, called MacKeye's Regiment, levied in August 1626, by Sir Donald MacKeye Lord Rees Colonel, for his Majestie's service of Denmark, and reduced after the battle of Nerling, in September 1634, at Wormes, in the Palz : Discharged in several duties and observations of service, first, under the magnanimous King of Denmark, during his wars against the Empire; afterwards under the invincible King of Sweden, during his Majestie's lifetime; and since under the Director-General, the Rex-Chancellor Oxensterne, and his Generals : Collected and gathered together, at spare hours, by Colonel Robert Monro, as First Lieutenant under the said Regiment, to the noble and worthy Captain Thoma MacKenzie of Kildon, brother to the noble Lord, the Lord Earl of Seaforth, for the use of all noble Cavaliers favouring the laudable profession of arms. To which is annexed, the Abridgement of Exercise, and divers Practical Observations for the Younger Officer, his consideration. Ending with the Soldier's Meditations on going on Service."—London, 1637.

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Another worthy of the same school, and nearly the same views of the military character, is Sir James Turner, a soldier of fortune, who rose to considerable rank in the reign of Charles II., had a command in Galloway and Dumfries-shire, for the suppression of conventicles, and was made prisoner by the insurgent Covenanters in that rising which was followed by the battle of Pentland. Sir James is a person even of superior pretensions to Lieutenant-Colonel Monro, having written a Military Treatise on the Pike-Exercise, called "Pallas Armata." Moreover, he was educated at Glasgow College, though he escaped to become an Ensign in the German wars, instead of taking his degree of Master of Arts at that learned seminary.

In latter times, he was author of several discourses on historical and literary subjects, from which the Bannatyne Club have extracted and printed such passages as concern his Life and Times, under the title of "Sir James Turner's Memoirs." From this curious book I extract the following passage, as an example of how Captain Dalgety might have recorded such an incident had he kept a journal, or, to give it a more just character, it is such as the genius of De Foe would have devised, to give the minute and distinguishing features of truth to a fictitious narrative :—

"Heere I will set doun ane accident befell me; for thogh it was not a very strange one, yet it was a very od one in all its parts, My tuo brigads lay in a village within halfe a mile of Applebie; my own quarter was in a gentleman's house, who was a Ritmaster, and at that time with Sir Marmaduke; his wife keepd her chamber readie to be brought to bed. The castle being over, and Lambert farre enough, I resolved to goe to bed everie night, haveing had fatigue enough before. The first night I sleepd well enough; and riseing nixt morning, I misd one linnen stockine, one half silke one, and one boothose, the accoustrement under a boote for one leg; neither could they be found for any search. Being provided of more

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of the same kind, I made myselfe reddie, and rode to the head-quarters. At my returne, I could heare no news of my stockins. That night I went to bed, and nixt morning found myselfe just so used; missing the three stockins for one leg onlie, the other three being left intire as they were the day before. A narrower search then the first was made, bot without successe. I had yet in reserve one paire of whole stockings, and a paire of boothose, greater then the former. These I put on my legs. The third morning I found the same usage, the stockins for one leg onlie left me. It was time for me then, and my servants too, to imagine it must be rats that had shared my stockins so inequallie with me; and this the mistress of the house knew well enough, but wold not tell it me. The roome, which was a low parlour, being well searched with candles, the top of my great boothose was found at a hole, in which they had drawne all the rest. I went abroad and orderd the boards to be raised, to see how the rats had disposed of my moveables. The mistress sent a servant of her oune to be present at this action, which she knew concernd her. One board being bot a litle opend, a litle boy of mine thrust in his hand, and fetchd with him foure and tuentie old peeces of gold, and one angell. The servant of the house affirmed it appertaind to his mistres. The boy bringing the gold to me, I went immediatlie to the gentlewomans chamber, and told her, it was probable Lambert haveing quarterd in that house, as indeed he had, some of his servants might have hid that gold; and if so, it was lawfullie mine; bot if she could make it appeare it belongd to her, I sould immediatlie give it her. The poor gentlewoman told me with many teares, that her husband being none of the frugallest men, (and indeed he was a spendthrift) she had hid that gold without his knowledge, to make use of it as she had occasion, especiallie when she lay in; and conjured me, as I lovd the King, (for whom her husband and she had sufferd much) not to detaine her gold. She said, if there was either more or lesse then foure and tuentie whole peeces, and two halfe ones, it sould be none of

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hers, and that they were put by her in a red velvet purse. After I had given her assureance of her gold, a new search is made, the other angell is found, the velvet purse all gnawd in bits, as my stockins were, and the gold instantlie restord to the gentlewoman. I have often heard that the eating or gnawing of cloths by rats is ominous, and portends some mischance to fall on these to whom the cloths belong. I thank God I was never addicted to such divinations, or heeded them. It is true, that more misfortunes then one fell on me shortlie after; bot I am sure I could have better forseene them myselfe then rats or any such vermine, and yet did it not. I have heard indeed many fine stories told of rats, how they abandon houses and ships, when the first are to be burnt, and the second dround. Naturalists say they are very sagacious creatures, and I beleeve they are so; bot I shall never be of the opinion they can forsee future contingencies, which I suppose the divell himselfe can neither forknow nor fortell; these being things which the Almightie hath keepd hidden in the bosome of his divine prescience. And whither the great God hath preordained or predestinated these things, which to us are contingent, to fall out by ane uncontrollable and unavoidable necessitie, is a question not yet decided."*

In quoting these ancient authorities, I must not forget the more modern sketch of a Scottish soldier of the old fashion, by a master-hand, in the character of Lesmahagow, since the existence of that doughty Captain alone must deprive the present author of all claim to absolute originality. Still Dalgetty, as the production of his own fancy, has been so far a favourite with its parent, that he has fallen into the error of assigning to the Captain too prominent a part in the story. This is the opinion of a critic who encamps on the highest pinnacles of literature; and the author is so far fortunate in having incurred his censure, that it gives his modesty a decent apology for quoting the praise, which it would have ill-befitted him to

* Sir James Turner's Memoirs, Bannatyne edition, p. 59.

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bring forward in an unmingled state. The passage occurs in the Edinburgh Review, No. 55, containing a criticism on Ivanhoe :—

"There is too much, perhaps, of Dalgetty,—or, rather, he engrosses too great a proportion of the work,—for, in himself, we think he is uniformly entertaining ;—and the author has nowhere shown more affinity to that matchless spirit who could bring out his Falstaffs and his Pistols, in act after act, and play after play, and exercise them every time with scenes of unbounded loquacity, without either exhausting their humour, or varying a note from its characteristic tone, than in his large and reiterated specimens of the eloquence of the redoubted Ritt-master. The general idea of the character is familiar to our comic dramatists after the Restoration—and may be said in some measure to be compounded of Captain Fluellen and Bobadil ;—but the ludicrous combination of the *soldado* with the Divinity student of Mareschal-College, is entirely original ; and the mixture of talent, selfishness, courage, coarseness, and conceit, was never so happily exemplified. Numerous as his speeches are, there is not one that is not characteristic—and, to our taste, divertingly ludicrous."

APPENDIX. NO I.

The scarcity of my late friend's poem may be an excuse for adding the spirited conclusion of Clan Alpin's vow. The Clan Gregor has met in the ancient church of Balquidder. The head of Drummond-Ernoch is placed on the altar, covered for a time with the banner of the tribe. The Chief of the tribe advances to the altar :

"And pausing, on the banner gazed ;
Then cried in scorn his finger raised,

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'This was the boon of Scotland's king;'
And, with a quick and angry fling,
Tossing the pageant screen away,
The dead man's head before him lay.
Unmoved he scann'd the visage o'er,
The clotted locks were dark with gore,
The features with convulsion grim,
The eyes contorted, sunk, and dim.
But unappall'd, in angry mood,
With lowering brow, unmoved he stood.
Upon the head his bared right hand
He laid, the other grasp'd his brand:
Then kneeling, cried, 'To Heaven I swear
This deed of death I own, and share;
As truly, fully mine, as though
This my right hand had dealt the blow:
Come then, our foemen, one, come all;
If to revenge this caitiff's fall
One blade is bared, one bow is drawn,
Mine everlasting peace I pawn,
To claim from them, or claim from him,
In retribution, limb for limb.
In sudden fray, or open strife,
This steel shall render life for life.'

"He ceased; and at his beckoning nod,
The clansmen to the altar trod;
And not a whisper breathed around,
And nought was heard of mortal sound,
Save from the clanking arms they bore,
That rattled on the marble floor;
And each as he approach'd in haste,
Upon the scalp his right hand placed;
With livid lip, and gather'd brow,
Each uttered in his turn, the vow.
Fierce Malcolm watch'd the passing scene,
And search'd them through with glances keen;
Then dash'd a tear-drop from his eye;
Unbid it came—he knew not why.
Exulting high, he towering stood:
'Kinsmen,' he cried, 'of Alpin's blood,
And worthy of Clan Alpin's name,
Unstain'd by cowardice and shame,
E'en do, spare nocht, in time of ill
Shall be Clan Alpin's legend still!'"

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NO. II.

It has been disputed whetner the Children of the Mist were actúal MacGregors, or whether they were not outlaws named MacDonald, belonging to Ardnamurchan. The following act of the Privy Council seems to decide the question :—

" *Edinburgh, 4th February*, 1589.

" The same day, the Lords of Secret Council being crediblie informed of ye cruel and mischeivous proceeding of ye wicked Clangrigor, so lang continueing in blood, slaughters, herships, manifest reifts, and stouths committed upon his Hieness' peaceable and good subjects ; inhabiting ye countries ewest ye brays of ye Highlands, thir money years bygone ; but specially heir after ye cruel murder of umqll Jo. Drummond of Drummoneyryuch, his Majesties proper tennant, and ane of his fosters of Glenartney, committed upon ye day of last bypast, be certain of ye said clan, be ye council and determination of ye haill, avow and to defend ye authors yrof qoever wald persew for revenge of ye same, qll ye said Jo. was occupied in seeking of venison to his Hieness, at command of Pat. Lord Drummond, stewart of Stratharne, and principal forrester of Glenartney ; the Queen, his Majesties dearest spouse, being yn, shortlie looked for to arrive in this realm. Likeas, after ye murder committed, ye authors yrof cutted off ye said umqll Jo. Drummond's head, and carried the same to the Laird of M'Grigor, who, and the haill surname of M'Grigors, purposely conveined upon the Sunday yrafter, at the Kirk of Buchquhidder ; qr they caused ye said umqll John's head to be pnted to ym, and yr avowing ye sd murder to have been committed by yr communion, council, and determination, laid yr hands upon the pow, and in eithnik, and barbarous manner, swear to defend ye authors of ye sd murder, in maist proud contempt of our sovrn Lord

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and his authoritie, and in evil example to others wicked limmaris to do ye like, give ys sall be suffered to remain unpunished."

Then follows a commission to the Earls of Huntly, Argyle, Athole, Montrose, Pat. Lord Drummond, Ja. Commendator of Incheffray, And. Campbel of Lochinnel, Duncan Campbel of Ardkinglas, Lauchlane M'Intosh of Dunnauchtane, Sir Jo. Murrya of Tullibarden, knt,. Geo. Buchanan of that Ilk, and And. M'Farlane of Ariquocher, to search for and apprehend Alaster M'Grigor of Glenstre, (and a number of others nominatim,) " and all others of the said Clangrigor, or ye assistars, culpable of the said odious murther, or of thift, reset of thift, herships, and sornings, qrever they may be apprehended. And if they refuse to be taken, or flees to strengths and houses, to pursue and assege them with fire and sword ; and this commission to endure for the space of three years."

Such was the system of police in 1589 ; and such the state of Scotland nearly thirty years after the Reformation.

POSTSCRIPT.

While these pages were passing through the press, the author received a letter from the present Robert Stewart of Ardvoirlich, favouring him with the account of the unhappy slaughter of Lord Kilpont, differing from, and more probable than, that given by Bishop Wishart, whose narrative infers either insanity or the blackest treachery on the part of James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, the ancestor of the present family of that name. It is but fair to give the entire communication as received from my respected correspondent, which is more minute than the histories of the period.

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"Although I have not the honour of being personally known to you, I hope you will excuse the liberty I now take, in addressing you on the subject of a transaction more than once alluded to by you, in which an ancestor of mine was unhappily concerned. I allude to the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, son of the Earl of Airth and Monteith, in 1644, by James Stewart of Ardvoirlich. As the cause of this unhappy event, and the quarrel which led to it, have never been correctly stated in any history of the period in which it took place, I am induced, in consequence of your having, in the second series of your admirable Tales on the History of Scotland, adopted Wishart's version of the transaction, and being aware that your having done so will stamp it with an authenticity which it does not merit, and with a view, as far as possible, to do justice to the memory of my unfortunate ancestor, to send you the account of this affair as it has been handed down in the family.

"James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, who lived in the early part of the 17th century, and who was the unlucky cause of the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, as before mentioned, was appointed to the command of one of several independent companies raised in the Highlands at the commencement of the troubles in the reign of Charles I.; another of these companies was under the command of Lord Kilpont, and a strong intimacy, strengthened by a distant relationship, subsisted between them. When Montrose raised the royal standard, Ardvoirlich was one of the first to declare for him, and is said to have been a principal means of bringing over Lord Kilpont to the same cause; and they accordingly, along with Sir John Drummond and their respective followers, joined Montrose, as recorded by Wishart, at Buchanty. While they served together, so strong was their intimacy, that they lived and slept in the same tent.

"In the meantime, Montrose had been joined by the Irish under the command of Alexander Macdonald; these, on their march to join Montrose, had committed

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some excesses on lands belonging to Ardvoirlich, which lay in the line of their march from the west coast. Of this Ardvoirlich complained to Montrose, who, probably wishing as much as possible to conciliate his new allies, treated it in rather an evasive manner. Ardvoirlich, who was a man of violent passions, having failed to receive such satisfaction as he required, challenged Macdonald to single combat. Before they met, however, Montrose, on the information and by advice, as it is said, of Kilpont, laid them both under arrest. Montrose, seeing the evils of such a feud at such a critical time, effected a sort of reconciliation between them, and forced them to shake hands in his presence; when, it was said, that Ardvoirlich, who was a very powerful man, took such a hold of Macdonald's hand as to make the blood start from his fingers. Still, it would appear, Ardvoirlich was by no means reconciled.

"A few days after the battle of Tippermuir, when Montrose with his army was encamped at Collace, an entertainment was given by him to his officers, in honour of the victory he had obtained, and Kilpont and his comrade Ardvoirlich were of the party. After returning to their quarters, Ardvoirlich, who seemed still to brood over his quarrel with Macdonald, and being heated with drink, began to blame Lord Kilpont for the part he had taken in preventing his obtaining redress, and reflecting against Montrose for not allowing him what he considered proper reparation. Kilpont of course defended the conduct of himself and his relative Montrose, till their argument came to high words; and finally, from the state they were both in, by an easy transition, to blows, when Ardvoirlich, with his dirk, struck Kilpont dead on the spot. He immediately fled, and under the cover of a thick mist escaped pursuit, leaving his eldest son Henry, who had been mortally wounded at Tippermuir, on his deathbed.

"His followers immediately withdrew from Montrose, and no course remained for him but to throw himself into the arms of the opposite faction, by whom he was well received. His name is frequently mentioned in Leslie's

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campaigns, and on more than one occasion he is mentioned as having afforded protection to several of his former friends through his interest with Leslie, when the King's cause became desperate.

"The foregoing account of this unfortunate transaction, I am well aware, differs materially from the account given by Wishart, who alleges that Stewart had laid a plot for the assassination of Montrose, and that he murdered Lord Kilpont in consequence of his refusal to participate in his design. Now, I may be allowed to remark, that besides Wishart having always been regarded as a partial historian, and very questionable authority on any subject connected with the motives or conduct of those who differed from him in opinion, that even had Stewart formed such a design, Kilpont, from his name and connexions, was likely to be the very last man of whom Stewart would choose to make a confidant and accomplice. On the other hand, the above account, though never, that I am aware, before hinted at, has been a constant tradition in the family; and, from the comparative recent date of the transaction, and the sources from which the tradition has been derived, I have no reason to doubt its perfect authenticity. It was most circumstantially detailed as above, given to my father, Mr. Stewart, now of Ardvoirlich, many years ago, by a man nearly connected with the family, who lived to the age of 100. This man was a great grandson of James Stewart, by a natural son John, of whom many stories are still current in this country, under his appellation of *John dhu Mhor*. This John was with his father at the time, and of course was a witness of the whole transaction; he lived till a considerable time after the Revolution, and it was from him that my father's informant, who was a man before his grandfather, John dhu Mhor's death, received the information as above stated.

"I have many apologies to offer for trespassing so long on your patience; but I felt a natural desire, if possible, to correct what I conceive to be a groundless imputation on the memory of my ancestor, before it shall come to

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be considered as a matter of History. That he was a man of violent passions and singular temper, I do not pretend to deny, as many traditions still current in this country amply verify; but that he was capable of forming a design to assassinate Montrose, the whole tenor of his former conduct and principles contradict. That he was obliged to join the opposite party, was merely a matter of safety, while Kilpont had so many powerful friends and connexions able and ready to avenge his death.

"I have only to add, that you have my full permission to make what use of this communication you please, and either to reject it altogether, or allow it such credit as you think it deserves; and I shall be ready at all times to furnish you with any further information on this subject which you may require, and which it may be in my power to afford.

"ARDVOIRLICH,
15th January, 1830.

The publication of a statement so particular, and probably so correct, is a debt due to the memory of James Stewart; the victim, it would seem, of his own violent passions, but perhaps incapable of an act of premeditated treachery.

ABBOTSFORD,
1st August, 1830.

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A LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

INTRODUCTION.

Sergeant More M'Alpin was, during his residence among us, one of the most honoured inhabitants of Gandercleugh. No one thought of disputing his title to the great leathern chair on the "cosiest side of the chimney," in the common room of the Wallace Arms, on a Saturday evening. No less would our sexton, John Duirward, have held it an unlicensed intrusion, to suffer any one to induct himself into the corner of the left-hand pew nearest to the pulpit, which the Sergeant regularly occupied on Sundays. There he sat, his blue invalid uniform brushed with the most scrupulous accuracy. Two medals of merit displayed at his button-hole, as well as the empty sleeve which should have been occupied by his right arm, bore evidence of his hard and honourable service. His weather-beaten features, his grey hair tied in a thin queue in the military fashion of former days, and the right side of his head a little turned up, the better to catch the sound of the clergyman's voice, were all marks of his profession and infirmities. Beside him sat his sister Janet, a little neat old woman, with a Highland curch and tartan plaid, watching the very looks of her brother, to her the greatest man upon earth, and actively looking out for him, in his silver-clasped Bible, the texts which the minister quoted or expounded.

I believe it was the respect that was universally paid

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to this worthy veteran by all ranks in Gandercleugh, which induced him to choose our village for his residence, for such was by no means his original intention.

He had risen to the rank of sergeant-major of artillery, by hard service in various quarters of the world, and was reckoned one of the most tried and trusty men of the Scotch Train. A ball, which shattered his arm in a peninsular campaign, at length procured him an honourable discharge, with an allowance from Chelsea, and a handsome gratuity from the patriotic fund. Moreover, Sergeant More M'Alpin had been prudent as well as valiant; and, from prize-money and savings, had become master of a small sum in the three per cent. consols.

He retired with the purpose of enjoying this income in the wild Highland glen, in which, when a boy, he had herded black cattle and goats, ere the roll of the drum had made him cock his bonnet an inch higher, and follow its music for nearly forty years. To his recollection, this retired spot was unparalleled in beauty by the richest scenes he had visited in his wanderings. Even the Happy Valley of Rasselas would have sunk into nothing upon the comparison. He came—he revisited the loved scene—it was but a sterile glen, surrounded with rude crags, and traversed by a northern torrent. This was not the worst. The fires had been quenched upon thirty hearths—of the cottage of his fathers he could but distinguish a few rude stones—the language was almost extinguished—the ancient race from which he boasted his descent had found a refuge beyond the Atlantic. One southland farmer, three grey-plaided shepherds, and six dogs, now tenanted the whole glen, which in his youth had maintained in content, if not in competence, upwards of two hundred inhabitants.

In the house of the new tenant, Sergeant M'Alpin found, however, an unexpected source of pleasure, and a means of employing his social affections. His sister Janet had fortunately entertained so strong a persuasion that her brother would one day return, that she had refused to accompany her kinsfolk upon their emigration.

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Nay, she had consented, though not without a feeling of degradation, to take service with the intruding Lowlander, who, though a Saxon, she said, had proved a kind man to her. This unexpected meeting with his sister seemed a cure for all the disappointments which it had been Sergeant More's lot to encounter, although it was not without a reluctant tear that he heard told, as a Highland woman alone could tell it, the story of the expatriation of his kinsmen.

She narrated at great length the vain offers they had made of advanced rent, the payment of which must have reduced them to the extremity of poverty, which they were yet contented to face, for permission to live and die on their native soil. Nor did Janet forget the portents which had announced the departure of the Celtic race, and the arrival of the strangers. For two years previous to the emigration, when the night wind howled down the pass of Ballachra, its notes were distinctly modelled to the tune of, "*Ha til mi tulidh*," (we return no more,) with which the emigrants usually bid farewell to their native shores. The uncouth cries of the Southland shepherds, and the barking of their dogs, were often heard in the mist of the hills long before their actual arrival. A bard, the last of his race, had commemorated the expulsion of the natives of the glen in a tune, which brought tears into the aged eyes of the veteran, and of which the first stanza may be thus rendered—

> Woe, woe, son of the Lowlander,
> Why wilt thou leave thine own bonny Border?
> Why comes thou hither, disturbing the Highlander,
> Wasting the glen that was once in fair order?

What added to Sergeant More M'Alpin's distress upon the occasion was, that the Chief by whom this change had been effected, was, by tradition and common opinion, held to represent the ancient leaders and fathers of the expelled fugitives; and it had hitherto been one of Sergeant More's principal subjects of pride to prove, by genealogical deduction, in what degree of kindred he

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stood to this personage. A woful change was now wrought in his sentiments towards him.

"I cannot curse him," he said, as he rose and strode through the room, when Janet's narrative was finished—"I will not curse him; he is the descendant and representative of my fathers. But never shall mortal man hear me name his name again." And he kept his word; for, until his dying day, no man heard him mention his selfish and hard-hearted chieftain.

After giving a day to sad recollections, the hardy spirit which had carried him through so many dangers, manned the Sergeant's bosom against this cruel disappointment. "He would go," he said, "to Canada to his kinsfolk, where they had named a transatlantic valley after the glen of their fathers. Janet," he said, "should kilt her coats like a leaguer lady; d—n the distance! it was a flea's leap to the voyages and marches he had made on a slighter occasion."

With this purpose he left the Highlands, and came with his sister as far as Gandercleugh, on his way to Glasgow, to take a passage to Canada. But winter was now set in, and as he thought it advisable to wait for a spring passage, when the St. Lawrence should be open, he settled among us for the few months of his stay in Britain. As we said before, the respectable old man met with deference and attention from all ranks of society; and when spring returned, he was so satisfied with his quarters, that he did not renew the purpose of his voyage. Janet was afraid of the sea, and he himself felt the infirmities of age and hard service more than he had at first expected. And, as he confessed to the clergyman, and my worthy principal, Mr. Cleishbotham, "it was better staying with kend friends, than going farther, and faring worse."

He therefore established himself and his domicile at Gandercleugh, to the great satisfaction, as we have already said, of all its inhabitants, to whom he became, in respect of military intelligence and able commentaries upon the newspapers, gazettes, and bulletins, a very ora-

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cle, explanatory of all martial events, past, present, or to come.

It is true, the Sergeant had his inconsistencies. He was a steady jacobite, his father and his four uncles having been out in the forty-five; but he was a no less steady adherent of King George, in whose service he had made his little fortune, and lost three brothers; so that you were in equal danger to displease him, in terming Prince Charles, the Pretender, or by saying anything derogatory to the dignity of King George. Further, it must not be denied, that when the day of receiving his dividends came round, the Sergeant was apt to tarry longer at the Wallace Arms of an evening, than was consistent with strict temperance, or indeed with his worldly interest; for upon these occasions, his compotators sometimes contrived to flatter his partialities by singing jacobite songs, and drinking confusion to Buonaparte, and the health of the Duke of Wellington, until the Sergeant was not only flattered into paying the whole reckoning, but occasionally induced to lend small sums to his interested companions. After such sprays, as he called them, were over, and his temper once more cool, he seldom failed to thank God, and the Duke of York, who had made it much more difficult for an old soldier to ruin himself by his folly, than had been the case in his younger days.

It was not on such occasions that I made a part of Sergeant More M'Alpin's society. But often, when my leisure would permit, I used to seek him, on what he called his morning and evening parade, on which, when the weather was fair, he appeared as regularly as if summoned by tuck of drum. His morning walk was beneath the elms in the church-yard; "for death," he said, "had been his next-door neighbour for so many years, that he had no apology for dropping the acquaintance. His evening promenade was on the bleaching-green by the river-side, where he was sometimes to be seen on an open bench, with spectacles on nose, conning over the newspapers to a circle of village politicians, explaining military terms, and aiding the comprehension of his hear-

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ers by lines drawn on the ground with the end of his rattan. On other occasions, he was surrounded by a bevy of school-boys, whom he sometimes drilled to the manual, and sometimes, with less approbation on the part of their parents, instructed in the mystery of artificial fire-works; for in the case of public rejoicings, the Sergeant was pyrotechnist (as the Encyclopedia calls it) to the village of Gandercleugh.

It was in his morning walk that I most frequently met with the veteran. And I can hardly yet look upon the village footpath, overshadowed by the row of lofty elms, without thinking I see his upright form advancing towards me with measured step, and his cane advanced, ready to pay me the military salute—but he is dead, and sleeps with his faithful Janet, under the third of those very trees, counting from the stile at the west corner of the church-yard.

The delight which I had in Sergeant M'Alpin's conversation, related not only to his own adventures, of which he had encountered many in the course of a wandering life, but also to his recollection of numerous Highland traditions, in which his youth had been instructed by his parents, and of which he would in after life have deemed it a kind of heresy to question the authenticity. Many of these belonged to the wars of Montrose, in which some of the Sergeant's ancestry had, it seems, taken a distinguished part. It has happened, that, although these civil commotions reflect the highest honour upon the Highlanders, being indeed the first occasion upon which they showed themselves superior, or even equal, to their Low-country neighbours in military encounters, they have been less commemorated among them than any one would have expected, judging from the abundance of traditions which they have preserved upon less interesting subjects. It was, therefore, with great pleasure, that I extracted from my military friend some curious particulars respecting that time; they are mixed with that measure of the wild and wonderful which belongs to the period and the narrator, but which I do not in the least object to the

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reader's treating with disbelief, providing he will be so good as give implicit credit to the natural events of the story, which, like all those which I have had the honour to put under his notice, actually rest upon a basis of truth.

CHAPTER I.

Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun,
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery,
And prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks.
Butler.

It was during the period of that great and bloody Civil War which agitated Britain during the seventeenth century, that our tale has its commencement. Scotland had as yet remained free from the ravages of intestine war, although its inhabitants were much divided in political opinions; and many of them, tired of the control of the Estates of Parliament, and disapproving of the bold measure which they had adopted, by sending into England a large army to the assistance of the Parliament, were determined on their part to embrace the earliest opportunity of declaring for the King, and making such a diversion as should at least compel the recall of General Leslie's army out of England, if it did not recover a great part of Scotland to the King's allegiance. This plan was chiefly adopted by the northern nobility, who had resisted with great obstinacy the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant, and by many of the chiefs of the Highland clans, who conceived their interest and authority to be connected with royalty, who had besides a decided aversion to the Presbyterian form of religion, and who, finally, were in that half savage state of society, in which war is always more welcome than peace.

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Great commotions were generally expected to arise from these concurrent causes; and the trade of incursion and depredation, which the Scotch Highlanders at all times exercised upon the Lowlands, began to assume a more steady, avowed, and systematic form, as part of a general military system.

Those at the head of affairs were not insensible to the peril of the moment, and anxiously made preparations to meet and to repel it. They considered, however, with satisfaction, that no leader or name of consequence had as yet appeared to assemble an army of royalists, or even to direct the efforts of those desultory bands, whom love of plunder, perhaps, as much as political principle, had hurried into measures of hostility. It was generally hoped that the quartering a sufficient number of troops in the Lowlands adjacent to the Highland line, would have the effect of restraining the mountain chieftains; while the power of various barons in the north, who had espoused the Covenant, as, for example, the Earl Mareschal, the great families of Forbes, Leslie, and Irvine, the Grants, and other Presbyterian clans, might counterbalance and bridle, not only the strength of the Ogilvies and other cavaliers of Angus and Kincardine, but even the potent family of the Gordons, whose extensive authority was only equalled by their extreme dislike to the Presbyterian model.

In the West Highlands the ruling party numbered many enemies; but the power of these disaffected clans was supposed to be broken, and the spirit of their chieftains intimidated, by the predominating influence of the Marquis of Argyle, upon whom the confidence of the Convention of Estates was reposed with the utmost security; and whose power in the Highlands, already exorbitant, had been still farther increased by concessions extorted from the King at the last pacification. It was indeed well known that Argyle was a man rather of political enterprize than personal courage, and better calculated to manage an intrigue of state, than to control the tribes of hostile mountaineers; yet the numbers of his clan, and

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the spirit of the gallant gentleman by whom it was led, might, it was supposed, atone for the personal deficiencies of their chief; and as the Campbells had already severely humbled several of the neighbouring tribes, it was supposed these would not readily again provoke an encounter with a body so powerful.

Thus having at their command the whole west and south of Scotland, indisputably the richest part of the kingdom; Fife-shire being in a peculiar manner their own, and possessing many and powerful friends even north of the Forth and Tay; the Scottish Convention of Estates saw no danger sufficient to induce them to alter the line of policy they had adopted, or to recall from the assistance of their brethren of the English Parliament that auxiliary army of twenty thousand men, by means of which accession of strength the King's party had been reduced to the defensive when in full career of triumph and success.

The causes which moved the Convention of Estates at this time to take such an immediate and active interest in the civil war of England, are detailed in our historians, but may be here shortly recapitulated. They had indeed no new injury or aggression to complain of at the hand of the King, and the peace which had been made between Charles and his subjects of Scotland had been carefully observed; but the Scottish rulers were well aware that this peace had been extorted from the King, as well by the influence of the parliamentary party in England, as by the terror of their own arms. It is true, King Charles had since then visited the capital of his ancient kingdom, had assented to the new organization of the church, and had distributed honours and rewards among the leaders of the party which had shown themselves most hostile to his interests; but it was suspected that distinctions so unwillingly conferred would be resumed as soon as opportunity offered. The low state of the English Parliament was seen in Scotland with deep apprehension; and it was concluded, that should Charles triumph by force of arms

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against his insurgent subjects of England, he would not be long in exacting from the Scotch the vengeance which he might suppose due to those who had set the example of taking up arms against him. Such was the policy of the measure which dictated the sending the auxiliary army into England; and it was avowed in a manifesto explanatory of their reasons for giving this timely and important aid to the English Parliament. The English Parliament, they said, had been already friendly to them, and might be so again; whereas the King, although he had so lately established religion among them according to their desires, had given them no ground to confide in his royal declaration, seeing they had found his promises and actions inconsistent with each other. "Our conscience," they concluded, "and God, who is greater than our conscience, beareth us record, that we aim altogether at the glory of God, peace of both nations, and honour of the King, in suppressing and punishing in a legal way, those who are the troublers of Israel, the fire-brands of hell, the Korahs, the Balaams, the Doegs, the Rabshakehs, the Hamans, the Tobiahs, the Sanballats of our time; which done, we are satisfied. Neither have we begun to use a military expedition to England as a mean for compassing those our pious ends, until all other means which we could think upon have failed us: and this alone is left to us *ultimum et unicum remedium*, the last and only remedy."

Leaving it to casuists to determine whether one contracting party is justified in breaking a solemn treaty, upon the suspicion that, in certain future contingencies it might be infringed by the other, we shall proceed to mention two other circumstances that had at least equal influence with the Scottish rulers and nation, with any doubts which they entertained of the King's good faith.

The first of these was the nature and condition of their army; headed by a poor and discontented nobility, under whom it was officered chiefly by Scottish soldiers of fortune, who had served in the German wars until they had lost almost all distinction of political principle,

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and even of country, in the adoption of the mercenary faith, that a soldier's principal duty was fidelity to the state or sovereign from whom he received his pay, without respect either to the justice of the quarrel, or to their own connection with either of the contending parties. To men of this stamp, Grotius applies the severe character—*Nullum vitæ genus est improbius, quam eorum, qui sine causæ respectu mercede conducti, militant.* To these mercenary soldiers, as well as to the needy gentry with whom they were mixed in command, and who easily imbibed the same opinions, the success of the late short invasion of England in 1641 was a sufficient reason for renewing so profitable an experiment. The good pay and free quarters of England had made a feeling impression upon the recollection of these military adventurers; and the prospect of again levying eight hundred and fifty pounds a-day, came in place of all arguments, whether of state or of morality.

Another cause inflamed the minds of the nation at large, no less than the tempting prospect of the wealth of England animated the soldiery. So much had been written and said on either side concerning the form of church government, that it had become a matter of infinitely more consequence in the eyes of the multitude, than the doctrines of that gospel which both churches had embraced. The Prelatists and Presbyterians of the more violent kind became as illiberal as the papists, and would scarcely allow the possibility of salvation beyond the pale of their respective churches. It was in vain remarked to these zealots, that had the Author of our holy religion considered any peculiar form of church government as essential to salvation, it would have been revealed with the same precision as under the Old Testament dispensation. Both parties continued as violent as if they could have pleaded the distinct commands of Heaven to justify their intolerance. Laud, in the days of his domination, had fired the train, by attempting to impose upon the Scottish people church ceremonies foreign to their habits and opinions. The success with which this

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had been resisted, and the Presbyterian model substituted in its place, had endeared the latter to the nation, as the cause in which they had triumphed. The Solemn League and Covenant, adopted with such zeal by the greater part of the kingdom, and by them forced, at the sword's point, upon the others, bore in its bosom, as its principal object, the establishing the doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian church, and the putting down all error and heresy; and having attained for their own country an establishment of this golden candlestick, the Scots became liberally and fraternally anxious to erect the same in England. This they conceived might be easily attained, by lending to the Parliament the effectual assistance of the Scottish forces. The Presbyterians, a numerous and powerful party in the English Parliament, had hitherto taken the lead in opposition to the King; while the Independents and other sectaries, who afterwards, under Cromwell, resumed the power of the sword, and overset the Presbyterian model both in Scotland and England, were as yet contented to lurk under the shelter of the wealthier and more powerful party. The prospect of bringing to a uniformity the kingdoms of England and Scotland in discipline and worship, seemed therefore as fair as it was desirable.

The celebrated Sir Henry Vane, one of the Commissioners who negociated the alliance betwixt England and Scotland, saw the influence which this bait had upon the spirits of those with whom he dealt; and although himself a violent Independent, he contrived at once to gratify and to elude the eager desires of the Presbyterians, by qualifying the obligation to reform the Church of England, as a change to be executed "according to the word of God, and the best reformed churches." Deceived by their own eagerness, themselves entertaining no doubts on the *Jus Divinum* of their own ecclesiastical establishments, and not holding it possible such doubts could be adopted by others, the Convention of Estates and the Kirk of Scotland conceived, that such expressions necessarily inferred the establishment of Presbytery;

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nor were they undeceived, until, when their help was no longer needful, the sectaries gave them to understand, that the phrase might be as well applied to Independency, or any other mode of worship, which those who were at the head of affairs at the time might consider as agreeable "to the word of God, and the practice of the reformed churches." Neither were the outwitted Scottish less astonished to find, that the designs of the English sectaries struck against the monarchical constitution of Britain, it having been their intention to reduce the power of the King, but by no means to abrogate the office. They fared, however, in this respect, like rash physicians, who commence by over-physicking a patient, until he is reduced to a state of weakness, from which cordials are afterwards unable to recover him.

But these events were still in the womb of futurity. As yet the Scottish Parliament held their engagement with England consistent with justice, prudence, and piety, and their military undertaking seemed to succeed to their very wish. The junction of the Scottish army with those of Fairfax and Manchester, enabled the parliamentary forces to besiege York, and to fight the desperate action of Long-Marston Moor, in which Prince Rupert and the Marquis of Newcastle were defeated. The Scottish auxiliaries, indeed, had less of the glory of this victory than their countrymen could desire. David Leslie, with their cavalry, fought bravely, and to them, as well as to Cromwell's brigade of Independents, the honour of the day belonged; but the old Earl of Leven, the covenanting general, was driven out of the field by the impetuous charge of Prince Rupert, and was thirty miles distant, in full flight towards Scotland, when he was overtaken by the news that his party had gained a complete victory.

The absence of these auxilliary troops, upon this crusade for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England, had considerably diminished the power of the Convention of

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Estates in Scotland, and had given rise to those agitations among the anti-covenanters, which we have noticed at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER II.

His mother could for him as cradle set
Her husband's rusty iron corselet;
Whose jangling sound could hush her babe to rest,
That never plained of his uneasy nest;
Then did he dream of dreary wars at hand,
And woke, and fought, and won, ere he could stand.

Hall's Satires.

It was towards the close of a summer's evening, during the anxious period which we have commemorated, that a young gentleman of quality, well mounted and armed, and accompanied by two servants, one of whom led a sumpter horse, rode slowly up one of those steep passes, by which the Highlands are accessible from the Lowlands of Perthshire.[1] Their course had lain for some time along the banks of a lake, whose deep waters reflected the crimson beams of the western sun. The broken path which they pursued with some difficulty, was in some places shaded by ancient birches and oak-trees, and in others overhung by fragments of huge rock. Elsewhere, the hill, which formed the northern side of this beautiful sheet of water, arose in steep, but less precipitous acclivity, and was arrayed in heath of the darkest purple. In the present times, a scene so romantic would have been judged to possess the highest charms for the traveller; but those who journey in days of doubt and dread, pay little attention to picturesque scenery.

The master kept, as often as the wood permitted, abreast of one or both of his domestics, and seemed earnestly to converse with them, probably because the

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distinctions of rank are readily set aside among those who are made to be sharers of common danger. The dispositions of the leading men who inhabit this wild country, and the probability of their taking part in the political convulsions that were soon expected, were the subjects of their conversation.

They had not advanced above half way up the lake, and the young gentleman was pointing to his attendants the spot where their intended road turned northwards, and, leaving the verge of the loch, ascended a ravine to the right hand, when they discovered a single horseman coming down the shore, as if to meet them. The gleam of the sun-beams upon his head-piece and corslet showed that he was in armour; and the purpose of the other travellers required, that he should not pass unquestioned. "We must know who he is," said the young gentleman, "and whither he is going." And putting spurs to his horse, he rode forward as fast as the rugged state of the road would permit, followed by his two attendants, until he reached the point where the pass along the side of the lake was intersected by that which descended from the ravine, securing thus against the possibility of the stranger eluding them, by turning into the latter road before they came up with him.

The single horseman had mended his pace, when he first observed the three riders advance rapidly towards him; but when he saw them halt and form a front, which completely occupied the path, he checked his horse, and advanced with great deliberation; so that each party had an opportunity to take a full survey of the other. The solitary stranger was mounted upon an able horse, fit for military service, and for the great weight which he had to carry, and his rider occupied his demipique, or war-saddle, with an air that showed it was his familiar seat. He had a bright burnished head-piece, with a plume of feathers, together with a cuirass, thick enough to resist a musket-ball, with a back-piece of lighter materials. These defensive arms he wore over a buff jerkin, along with a pair of gauntlets or steel-gloves, the tops of which

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reached up to his elbow, and which, like the rest of his armour, were of bright steel. At the front of his military saddle hung a case of pistols, far beyond the ordinary size, nearly two feet in length, and carrying bullets of twenty to the pound. A buff-belt, with a broad silver buckle, sustained on one side a long straight double-edged broadsword, with a strong guard, and a blade calculated either to strike or push. On the right side hung a dagger of about eighteen inches in length; a shoulder-belt sustained at his back a musketoon or blunderbuss, and was crossed by a bandalier containing his charges of ammunition. Thigh-pieces of steel, then termed taslets, met the tops of his huge jack-boots, and completed the equipage of a well-armed trooper of the period.

The appearance of the horseman himself corresponded well with his military equipage, to which he had the air of having been long inured. He was above the middle size, and of strength sufficient to bear with ease the weight of his weapons, offensive and defensive. His age might be forty and upwards, and his countenance was that of a resolute weather-beaten veteran, who had seen many fields, and brought away in token more than one scar. At the distance of about thirty yards he halted and stood fast, raised himself on his stirrups, as if to reconnoitre and ascertain the purpose of the opposite party, and brought his musketoon under his right arm, ready for use, if occasion should require it. In every thing but numbers, he had the advantage of those who seemed inclined to interrupt his passage.

The leader of the party was, indeed, well mounted, and clad in a buff-coat, richly embroidered, the half-military dress of the period; but his domestics had only coarse jackets of thick felt, which could scarce be expected to turn the edge of a sword, if wielded by a strong man; and none of them had any weapons, save swords and pistols, without which gentlemen, or their attendants, during those disturbed times, seldom stirred abroad.

When they had stood at gaze for about a minute, the younger gentleman gave the challenge, which was then

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common in the mouth of all strangers who met in such circumstances—"For whom are you?"

"Tell me first," answered the soldier, "for whom are you? the strongest party should speak first."

"We are for God and King Charles," answered the first speaker—"Now tell your faction, you know ours."

"I am for God and my standard," answered the single horseman.

"And for which standard?" replied the chief of the other party—"Cavalier or Roundhead, King or Convention?"

"By my troth, sir," answered the soldier, "I would be loth to reply to you with an untruth, as a thing unbecoming a cavalier of fortune and a soldier. But to answer your query with beseeming veracity, it is necessary I should myself have resolved to whilk of the present divisions of the kingdom I shall ultimately adhere, being a matter whereon my mind is not as yet preceesely ascertained."

"I should have thought," answered the gentleman, "that, when loyalty and religion are at stake, no gentleman or man of honour could be long in choosing his party."

"Truly, sir," replied the trooper, "if ye speak this in the way of vituperation, as meaning to impugn my honour or genteelity, I would blithely put the same to issue, venturing in that quarrel with my single person against you three. But if you speak it in the way of logical ratiocination, whilk I have studied in my youth at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen, I am ready to prove to ye *logicé*, that my resolution to defer, for a certain season, the taking upon me either of these quarrels, not only becometh me as a gentleman and a man of honour, but also as a person of sense and prudence, one imbued with humane letters in his early youth, and who, from thenceforward, has followed the wars under the banner of the invincible Gustavus, the Lion of the North, and under many other heroic leaders, both Lutheran and Calvanist, Papist and Arminian."

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After exchanging a word or two with his domestics, the younger gentleman replied, "I should be glad, sir, to have some conversation with you upon so interesting a question, and should be proud if I can determine you in favour of the cause I have myself espoused. I ride this evening to a friend's house not three miles distant, whither if you choose to accompany me, you shall have good quarters for the night, and free permission to take your own road in the morning, if you then feel no inclination to join with us."

"Whose word am I to take for this?" answered the cautious soldier—"A man must know his guarantee, or he may fall into an ambuscade."

"I am called," answered the younger stranger, "the Earl of Menteith, and I trust you will receive my honour as a sufficient security."

"A worthy nobleman," answered the soldier, "whose parole is not to be doubted." With one motion he replaced his musketoon at his back, and with another made his military salute to the young nobleman, and continuing to talk as he rode forward to join him—"And I trust," said he, "my own assurance, that I will be *bon camarado* to your lordship in peace or in peril, during the time we shall abide together, will not be altogether vilipended in these doubtful times, when, as they say, a man's head is safer in a steel-cap than in a marble palace."

"I assure you, sir," said Lord Menteith, "that to judge from your appearance, I most highly value the advantage of your escort; but I trust we shall have no occasion for any exercise of valour, as I expect to conduct you to good and friendly quarters."

"Good quarters, my lord," replied the soldier, "are always acceptable, and are only to be postponed to good pay or good booty,—not to mention the honour of a cavalier, or the needful points of commanded duty. And truly, my lord, your noble proffer is not the less welcome, in that I knew not preceesely this night where I and my poor companion (patting his horse) were to find lodgments."

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"May I be permitted to ask, then," said Lord Menteith, "to whom I have the good fortune to stand quarter-master?"

"Truly, my lord," said the trooper, "my name is Dalgetty—Dugald Dalgetty, Ritt-master Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, at your honourable service to command. It is a name you may have seen in *Gallo Belgicus* the *Swedish Intelligencer*, or, if you read High-Dutch, in the *Fliegenden Mercoeur* of Leipsic. My father, my lord, having by unthrifty courses reduced a fair patrimony to a nonentity, I had no better shift, when I was eighteen years auld, than to carry the learning whilk I had acquired at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen, my gentle bluid and designation of Drumthwacket, together with a pair of stalwarth arms, and legs conform, to the German wars, there to push my way as a cavalier of fortune. My lord, my legs and arms stood me in more stead than either my gentle kin or my book-lear, and I found myself trailing a pike as a private gentleman under old Sir Ludovic Leslie, where I learned the rules of service so tightly, that I will not forget them in a hurry. Sir, I have been made to stand guard eight hours, being from twelve at noon to eight o'clock of the night, at the palace, armed with back and breast, head-piece and bracelets, being iron to the teeth, in a bitter frost, and the ice was as hard as ever was flint; and all for stopping an instant to speak to my landlady, when I should have gone to roll-call."

"And, doubtless, sir," replied Lord Menteith, "you have gone through some hot service, as well as this same cold duty you talk of?"

"Surely, my lord, it doth not become me to speak; but he that hath seen the fields of Leipsic and of Lutzen, may be said to have seen pitched battles. And one who hath witnessed the in-taking of Frankfort, and Spanheim, and Nuremburg, and so forth, should know somewhat about leaguers, storms, onslaughts, and outfalls."

"But your merit, sir, and experience, were doubtless followed by promotion?"

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"It came slow, my lord, dooms slow," replied Dalgetty; "but as my Scottish countrymen, the fathers of the war, and the raisers of those valorous Scottish regiments that were the dread of Germany, began to fall pretty thick, what with pestilence and what with the sword, why we their children succeeded to their inheritance. Sir, I was six years first private gentleman of the company, and three years lance speisade; disdaining to receive a halberd, as unbecoming my birth. Wherefore I was ultimately promoted to be a fahn-dragger, as the High Dutch call it, (which signifies an ancient) in the King's Leif Regiment of Black-Horse; and thereafter I arose to be lieutenant and ritt-master, under that invincible monarch, the bulwark of the Protestant faith, the Lion of the North, the terror of Austria, Gustavus the Victorious."

"And yet, if I understand you, Captain Dalgetty,—I think that rank corresponds with your foreign title of ritt-master——"

"The same grade preceesely," answered Dalgetty; "ritt-master signifying literally file-leader."

"I was observing," continued Lord Menteith, "that, if I understood you right, you had left the service of this great Prince."

"It was after his death—it was after his death, sir," said Dalgetty, "when I was in no shape bound to continue mine adherence. There are things, my lord, in that service, that cannot but go against the stomach of any cavalier of honour. In especial, albeit the pay be none of the most superabundant, being only about sixty dollars a-month to a ritt-master, yet the invincible Gustavus never paid above one-third of that sum, whilk was distributed monthly by way of loan; although, when justly considered, it was, in fact, a borrowing by that great monarch of the additional two-thirds which were due to the soldier. And I have seen some whole regiments of Dutch and Holsteiners mutiny on the field of battle, like base scullions, crying out Gelt, gelt, signifying their desire of pay, instead of falling to blows like our noble Scottish

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blades, who ever disdained, my lord, postponing of honour to filthy lucre."

"But were not these arrears," said Lord Menteith, "paid to the soldiery at some stated period?"

"My lord," said Dalgetty, "I take it on my conscience, that at no period, and by no possible process, could one creutzer of them ever be recovered. I myself never saw twenty dollars of my own all the time I served the invincible Gustavus, unless it was from the chance of a storm, or victory, or the fetching in some town or doorp, when a cavalier of fortune, who knows the usage of wars, seldom faileth to make some small profit."

"I begin rather to wonder, sir," said Lord Menteith, "that you should have continued so long in the Swedish service, than that you should have ultimately withdrawn from it."

"Neither I should," answered the Ritt-master; "but that great leader, captain, and king, the Lion of the North, and the bulwark of the Protestant faith, had a way of winning battles, taking towns, overrunning countries, and levying contributions, whilk made his service irresistibly delectable to all true-bred cavaliers who follow the noble profession of arms. Simple as I ride here, my lord, I have myself commanded the whole stift of Dunklespiel on the Lower Rhine, occupying the Palsgrave's palace, consuming his choice wines with my comrades, calling in contributions, requisitions, and caduacs, and not failing to lick my fingers, as became a good cook. But truly all this glory hastened to decay, after our great master had been shot with three bullets on the field of Lutzen; wherefore, finding that Fortune had changed sides, that the borrowings and lendings went on as before out of our pay, while the caduacs and casualties were all cut off, I e'en gave up my commission, and took service with Wallenstein, in Walter Butler's Irish regiment."

"And may I beg to know of you," said Lord Menteith, apparently interested in the adventures of this soldier of fortune, "how you liked this change of masters?"

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"Indifferent well," said the Captain—"very indifferent well. I cannot say that the Emperor paid much better than the Great Gustavus. For hard knocks, we had plenty of them. I was often obliged to run my head against my old acquaintances, the Swedish feathers, whilk your honour must conceive to be double-pointed stakes, shod with iron at each end, and planted before the squad of pikes to prevent an onfall of the cavalry. The whilk Swedish feathers, although they look gay to the eye, resembling the shrubs or lesser trees of a forest, as the puissant pikes, arranged in battalia behind them, correspond to the tall pines thereof, yet, nevertheless, are not altogether so soft to encounter as the plumage of a goose. Howbeit, in despite of heavy blows and light pay, a cavalier of fortune may thrive indifferently well in the Imperial service, in respect his private casualties are nothing so closely looked to as by the Swede; and so that an officer did his duty on the field, neither Wallenstein nor Pappenheim, nor old Tilly before them, would likely listen to the objurgations of boors or burghers against any commander or soldado, by whom they chanced to be somewhat closely shorn. So that an experienced cavalier, knowing how to lay, as our Scottish phrase runs, 'the head of the sow to the tail of the grice,' might get out of the country the pay whilk he could not obtain from the emperor."

"With a full hand, sir, doubtless, and with interest," said Lord Mentieth.

"Indubitably, my lord," answered Dalgetty, composedly; "for it would be doubly disgraceful for any soldado of rank to have his name called in question for any petty delinquency."

"And pray, sir," continued Lord Menteith, "wha made you leave so gainful a service?"

"Why, truly, sir," answered the soldier, "an Irish cavalier, called O'Quilligan, being major of our regiment, and I having had words with him the night before, respecting the worth and precedence of our several nations, it pleased him the next day to deliver his orders to me with the point of his batoon advanced and held aloof, in-

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stead of declining and trailing the same, as is the fashion from a courteous commanding-officer towards his equal in rank, though, it may be, his inferior in military grade. Upon this quarrel, sir, we fought in private rencontre; and as, in the perquisitions which followed, it pleased Walter Butler, our Oberst or colonel, to give the lighter punishment to his countryman, and the heavier to me, whereupon, ill-stomaching such partiality, I exchanged my commission for one under the Spaniard."

"I hope you found yourself better off by the change?" said Lord Menteith.

"In good sooth," answered the Ritt-master, "I had but little to complain of. The pay was somewhat regular, being furnished by the rich Flemings and Waloons of the Low Country. The quarters were excellent; the good wheaten loaves of the Flemings were better than the Provant rye-bread of the Swede, and Rhenish wine was more plenty with us than ever I saw the black-beer of Rostock in Gustavus's camp. Service there was none, duty there was little; and that little we might do, or leave undone, at our pleasure; an excellent retirement for a cavalier somewhat weary of field and leaguer, who had purchased with his blood as much honour as might serve his turn, and was desirous of a little ease and good living."

"And may I ask," said Lord Menteith, "why you, Captain, being, as I suppose, in the situation you describe, retired from the Spanish service also?"

"You are to consider, my lord, that your Spaniard," replied Captain Dalgetty, "is a person altogether unparalleled in his own conceit, wherethrough he maketh not fit account of such foreign cavaliers of valour as are pleased to take service with him. And a galling thing it is to every honourable soldado, to be put aside, and postponed, and obliged to yield preference to every puffing signor, who, were it the question which should first mount a breach at push of pike, might be apt to yield willing place to a Scottish cavalier. Moreover, sir, I was pricked in conscience respecting a matter of religion.

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"I should not have thought, Captain Dalgetty," said the young nobleman, "that an old soldier who had changed service so often, would have been too scrupulous on that head."

"No more I am, my lord," said the Captain, "since I hold it to be the duty of the chaplain of the regiment to settle those matters for me, and every other brave cavalier, inasmuch as he does nothing else that I know of for his pay and allowances. But this was a particular case, my lord, *a casus improvisus*, as I may say, in whilk I had no chaplain of my own persuasion to act as my adviser. I found, in short, that although my being a Protestant might be winked at, in respect that I was a man of action, and had more experience than all the Dons in our *tertia* put together, yet, when in garrison, it was expected I should go to mass with the regiment. Now, my lord, as a true Scottish man, and educated at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen, I was bound to uphold the mass to be an act of blinded papistry and utter idolatry, whilk I was altogether unwilling to homologate by my presence. True it is, that I consulted on the point with a worthy countryman of my own, one Father Fatsides, of the Scottish Convent in Wurtzburgh"——

"And I hope," observed Lord Menteith, "you obtained a clear opinion from this same ghostly father?"

"As clear as it could be," replied Captain Dalgetty, "considering we had drunk six flasks of Rhenish, and about two mutchkins of Kirchen-wasser. Father Fatsides informed me, that, as nearly as he could judge for a heretic like myself, it signified not much whether I went to mass or not, seeing my eternal perdition was signed and sealed at any rate, in respect of my impenitent and obdurate perseverance in my damnable heresy. Being discouraged by this response, I applied to a Dutch pastor of the reformed church, who told me, he thought I might lawfully go to mass, in respect that the prophet permitted Naaman, a mighty man of valour and an honourable cavalier of Syria, to follow his master into the house of Rimmon, a false god, or idol, to whom he had vowed service, and to bow down when the King was leaning upon his

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hand. But neither was this answer satisfactory to me, both because there was an unco difference between an anointed king of Syria, and our Spanish colonel, whom I could have blown away like the peeling of an ingan, and chiefly because I could not find the thing was required of me by any of the articles of war; neither was I proffered any consideration, either in perquisite or pay, for the wrong I might thereby do to my conscience."

"So you again changed your service?" said Lord Menteith.

"In troth did I, my lord; and after trying for a short while two or three other powers, I even took on for a time with their High Mightinesses the States of Holland."

"And how did their service jump with your humour?" again demanded his companion.

"O! my lord," said the soldier in a sort of enthusiasm, "their behaviour on pay-day might be a pattern to all Europe—no borrowings, no lendings, no offsets, no arrears, —all balanced and paid like a banker's book. The quarters, too, are excellent, and the allowances unchallengeable; but then, sir, they are a preceese, scrupulous people, and will allow nothing for peccadilloes. So that if a boor complains of a broken head, or a beer-seller of a broken can, or a daft wench does but squeak loud enough to be heard above her breath, a soldier of honour shall be dragged, not before his own court-martial, who can best judge of and punish his demerits, but before a base mechanical burgo-master, who shall menace him with the rasp-house, the cord, and what not, as if he were one of their own mean, amphibious, twenty-breeched boors. So not being able to dwell longer among those ungrateful plebeians, who, although unable to defend themselves by their proper strength, will nevertheless allow the noble foreign cavalier who engages with them nothing beyond his dry wages, which no honourable spirit will put in competition with a liberal license and honourable countenance, I resolved to leave the service of the Mynheers. And hearing at this time, to my exceeding satisfaction, tha

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there is something to be doing this summer in my way in this my dear native country, I am come hither, as they say, like a beggar to a bridal, in order to give my loving countrymen the advantage of that experience which I have acquired in foreign parts. So your lordship has an outline of my brief story, excepting my deportment in those passages of action in the field, in leaguers, storms, and onslaughts, whilk would be wearisome to narrate, and might, peradventure, better befit any other tongue than mine own.'

CHAPTER III.

For pleas of right let statesmen vex their head,
Battle's my business, and my guerdon bread;
And, with the sworded Switzer, I can say,
The best of causes is the best of pay.

Donne.

The difficulty and narrowness of the road had by this time become such as to interrupt the conversation of the travellers, and Lord Menteith, reining back his horse, held a moment's private conversation with his domestics. The Captain, who now led the van of the party, after about a quarter of a mile's slow and toilsome advance up a broken and rugged ascent, emerged into an upland valley, to which a mountain stream acted as a drain, and afforded sufficient room upon its green sward banks for the travellers to pursue their journey in a more social manner.

Lord Menteith accordingly resumed the conversation, which had been interrupted by the difficulties of the way. "I should have thought," said he to Captain Dalgetty, "that a cavalier of your honourable mark, who hath so long followed the valiant King of Sweden, and entertains such a suitable contempt for the base mechanical States of Holland, would not have hesitated to embrace the cause of King Charles, in preference to that of the low-born,

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roundheaded, canting knaves, who are in rebellion against his authority?"

"Ye speak reasonably, my lord," said Dalgetty, "and, *cæteris paribus*, I might be induced to see the matter in the same light. But, my lord, there is a southern proverb,—fine words butter no parsnips. I have heard enough since I came here, to satisfy me that a cavalier of honour is free to take any part in this civil embroilment whilk he may find most convenient for his own peculiar. Loyalty is your pass-word, my lord—Liberty, roars another chield from the other side of the strath—the King, shouts one war-cry—the Parliament, roars another—Montrose for ever, cries Donald, waving his bonnet—Argyle and Leven, cries a south-country Saunders, vapouring with his hat and feather. Fight for the bishops, says a priest, with his gown and rochet—Stand stout for the kirk, cries a minister, in a Geneva cap and band.—Good watch-words all—excellent watch-words. Whilk cause is the best, I cannot say. But sure am I that I have fought knee-deep in blood many a day for one that was ten degrees worse than the worst of them all."

"And pray, Captain Dalgetty," said his lordship, "since the pretensions of both parties seem to you so equal, will you please to inform us by what circumstances your perference will be determined?"

"Simply upon two considerations, my lord," answered the soldier. "Being, first, on which side my services would be in most honourable request:—And, secondly, whilk is a corollary of the first, by whilk party they are likely to be most gratefully requited. And, to deal plainly with you, my lord, my opinion at present doth on both points rather incline to the side of the Parliament."

"Your reasons, if you please," said Lord Menteith, "and perhaps I may be able to meet them with some others which are more powerful."

"Sir, I shall be amenable to reason," said Captain Dalgetty, "supposing it addresses itself to my honour and my interest. Well, then, my lord, here is a sort of Highland host assembled, or expected to assemble, in these

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wild hills, in the King's behalf. Now, sir, you know the nature of our Highlanders. I will not deny them to be a people stout in body and valiant in heart, and courageous enough in their own wild way of fighting, which is as remote from the usages and discipline of war, as ever was that of the ancient Scythians, or of the salvage Indians of America that now is. They havena so mickle as a German whistle, or a drum, to beat a march, an alarm, a charge, a retreat, a reveillé, or the tattoo, or any other point of war; and their damnable skirlin' pipes, whilk they themselves pretend to understand, are unintelligible to the ears of any cavaliero accustomed to civilized warfare. So that, were I undertaking to discipline such a breechless mob, it were impossible for me to be understood; and, if I were understood, judge ye, my lord, what chance I had of being obeyed among a band of half salvages, who are accustomed to pay to their own lairds and chiefs, allenarly, that respect and obedience whilk ought to be paid to commissionate officers. If I were teaching them to form battalia by extracting the square root, that is, by forming your square battalion of equal number of men of rank and file, corresponding to the square root of the full number present, what return could I expect for communicating this golden secret of military tactic, except it may be a dirk in my wame, on placing some M'Alister More, M'Shemei, or Capperfae, in the flank or rear, when he claimed to be in the van?—Truly, well saith holy writ, 'if ye cast pearls before swine, they will turn again and rend ye.'"

"I believe, Anderson," said Lord Menteith, looking back to one of his servants, for both were close behind him, "you can assure this gentleman, we shall have more occasion for experienced officers, and be more disposed to profit by their instructions, than he seems to be aware of."

"With your honour's permission," said Anderson, respectfully raising his cap, "when we are joined by the Irish infantry who are expected, and who should be landed in the West Highlands before now, we shall have need of good soldiers to discipline our levies."

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"And I should like well—very well, to be employed in such service," said Dalgetty; "the Irish are pretty fellows—very pretty fellows—I desire to see none better in the field. I once saw a brigade of Irish, at the taking of Frankfort upon the Oder, stand to it with sword and pike until they beat off the blue and yellow Swedish brigades, esteemed as stout as any that fought under the immortal Gustavus. And although stout Hepburn, valiant Lumsdale, courageous Monroe, with myself and other cavaliers, made entry elsewhere at point of pike, yet, had we all met with such opposition, we had returned with great loss and little profit. Wherefore these valiant Irishes, being all put to the sword, as is usual in such cases, did nevertheless gain immortal praise and honour; so that, for their sakes, I have always loved and honoured those of that nation next to my own country of Scotland."

"A command of Irish," said Mentieth, "I think I could almost promise you, should you be disposed to embrace the royal cause."

"And yet," said Captain Dalgetty, "my second and greatest difficulty remains behind; for, although I hold it a mean and sordid thing for a soldado to have nothing in his mouth but pay and gelt, like the base cullions, the German lanz-knechts, whom I mentioned before; and although I will maintain it with my sword, that honour is to be preferred before pay, free quarters, and arrears, yet, *ex contrario*, a soldier's pay being the counterpart of his engagement of service, it becomes a wise and considerate cavalier to consider what remuneration he is to receive for his service, and from what funds it is to be paid. And truly, my lord, from what I can see and hear, the Convention are the purse-masters. The Highlanders, indeed, may be kept in humour, by allowing them to steal cattle; and for the Irishes, your lordship and your noble associates may, according to the practice of the wars in such cases, pay them as seldom or as little as may suit your pleasure or convenience; but the same mode of treatment doth not apply to a cavalier like me, who must keep up his horses,

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servants, arms, and equipage, and who neither can, nor will, go to warfare upon his own charges."

Anderson, the domestic who had before spoken, now respectfully addressed his master—"I think, my lord," he said, "that, under your lordship's favour, I could say something to remove Captain Dalgetty's second objection also. He asks us where we are to collect our pay? Now, in my poor mind, the resources are as open to us as to the Covenanters. They tax the country according to their pleasure, and dilapidate the estates of the King's friends; now, were we once in the Lowlands, with our Highlanders and our Irish at our backs, and our swords in our hands, we can find many a fat traitor whose ill-gotten wealth shall fill our military chest and satisfy our soldiery. Besides, confiscations will fall in thick; and, in giving donations of forfeited lands to every adventurous cavalier who joins his standard, the King will at once reward his friends and punish his enemies. In short, he that joins these Roundhead dogs may get some miserable pittance of pay—he that joins our standard has a chance to be knight, lord, or earl, if luck serve him."

"Have you ever served, my good friend?" said the Captain to the spokesman.

"A little, sir, in these our domestic quarrels," answered the man, modestly.

"But never in Germany or the Low Countries?" said Dalgetty.

"I never had the honour," answered Anderson.

"I profess," said Dalgetty, addressing Lord Menteith, "your lordship's servant has a sensible, natural, pretty idea of military matters; somewhat irregular though, and smells a little too much of selling the bear's skin before he has hunted him. I will take the matter, however, into my consideration."

"Do so, Captain," said Lord Menteith; "you will have the night to think of it, for we are now near the house, where I hope to insure you a hospitable reception."

"And that is what will be very welcome," said the Captain, "for I have tasted no food since daybreak but

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a farl of oat-cake, which I divided with my horse. So I have been fain to draw my sword-belt three bores tighter for very extenuation, lest hunger and heavy iron should make the gird slip."

CHAPTER IV.

Once on a time, no matter when,
Some Glunimies met in a glen;
As deft and tight as ever wore
A dirk, a targe, and a claymore,
Short hose, and belted plaid or trews,
In Uist, Lochaber, Skye, or Lewes,
Or cover'd hard head with his bonnet;
Had you but known them you would own it.

Meston.

A HILL was now before the travellers, covered with an ancient forest of Scottish firs, the topmost of which, flinging their scathed branches across the western horizon, gleamed ruddy in the setting sun. In the centre of this wood rose the towers, or rather the chimneys, of the house, or castle, as it was called, destined for the end of their journey.

As usual at that period, one or two high-ridged narrow buildings, intersecting and crossing each other, formed the *corps de logis*. A projecting bartizan or two, with the addition of small turrets at the angles, much resembling pepper-boxes, had procured for Darnlinvarach the dignified appellation of a castle. It was surrounded by a low court-yard wall, within which were the usual offices.

As the travellers approached more nearly, they discovered marks of recent additions to the defences of the place, which had been suggested, doubtless, by the insecurity of those troublesome times. Additional loopholes for musketry were struck out in different parts of the

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building and of its surrounding wall. The windows had just been carefully secured by stanchions of iron, crossing each other athwart and end-long, like the grates of a prison. The door of the court-yard was shut, and it was only after cautious challenge that one of its leaves was opened by two domestics, both strong Highlanders, and both under arms, like Bitias and Pandarus in the Æneid, ready to defend the entrance, if aught hostile had ventured an intrusion.

When the travellers were admitted into the court, they found additional preparations for defence. The walls were scaffolded for the use of fire-arms, and one or two of the small guns, called sackers, or falcons, were mounted at the angles and flanking turrets.

More domestics, both in the Highland and Lowland dress, instantly rushed from the interior of the mansion, and some hastened to take the horses of the strangers, while others waited to marshall them away into the dwelling-house. But Captain Dalgetty refused the proffered assistance of those who wished to relieve him of the charge of his horse. "It is my custom, my friends, to see Gustavus (for so I have called him after my invincible master) accommodated myself; we are old friends and fellow-travellers, and as I often need the use of his legs, I always lend him in my turn the service of my tongue, to call for whatever he has occasion for;" and accordingly he strode into the stable after his steed without farther apology.

Neither Lord Menteith nor his attendants paid the same attention to their horses, but leaving them to the proffered care of the servants of the place, walked forward into the house, where a sort of dark vaulted vestibule displayed, among other miscellaneous articles, a huge barrel of two-penny ale, beside which were ranged two or three wooden queichs or bickers, ready, it would appear, for the service of whoever thought proper to employ them. Lord Menteith applied himself to the spigot, drank without ceremony, and then handed the stoup to Anderson, who followed his master's example, but not until he had flung out

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the drop o ale which remained, and slightly rinsed the wooden cup.

"What the deil, man," said an old Highland servant belonging to the family, "can she no drink after her ain master without washing the cup and spilling the ale, and be tamned to her!"

"I was bred in France," answered Anderson, "where nobody drinks after another out of the same cup, unless it be after a young lady."

"The teil's in their nicety!" said Donald; "and if the ale be gude, fat the waur is't that another man's beard's been in the queich before ye?"

Anderson's companion drank without observing the ceremony which had given Donald so much offence, and both of them followed their master into the low-arched stone hall, which was the common rendezvous of a Highland family. A large fire of peats in the huge chimney at the upper end shed a dim light through the apartment, and was rendered necessary by the damp, by which, even during the summer, the apartment was rendered uncomfortable. Twenty or thirty targets, as many claymores, with dirks, and plaids, and guns, both match-lock and fire-lock, and long-bows, and cross-bows, and Lochaber axes, and coats of plate armour, and steel-bonnets, and head-pieces, and the more ancient habergeons, or shirts of reticulated mail, with hood and sleeves corresponding to it, all hung in confusion about the walls, and would have formed a month's amusement to a member of a modern antiquarian society. But such things were too familiar, to attract much observation on the part of the present spectators.

There was a large clumsy-oaken table, which the hasty hospitality of the domestic who had before spoken, immediately spread with milk, butter, goat-milk cheese, a flagon of beer, and a flask of usquebæ, designed for the refreshment of Lord Menteith; while an inferior servant made similar preparations at the bottom of the table for the benefit of his attendants. The space which intervened be-

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tween them, was, according to the manners of the times, sufficient distinction between master and servant, even though the former was, as in the present instance, of high rank. Meanwhile the guests stood by the fire—the young nobleman under the chimney, and his servants at some little distance.

"What do you think, Anderson," said the former, "of our fellow-traveller?"

"A stout fellow," replied Anderson, "if all be good that is upcome. I wish we had twenty such to put our Teagues into some sort of discipline."

"I differ from you, Anderson," said Lord Menteith; "I think this fellow Dalgetty is one of those horse-leeches, whose appetite for blood being only sharpened by what he has sucked in foreign countries, he is now returned to batten upon that of his own. Shame on the pack of these mercenary swordmen! they have made the name of Scot through all Europe equivalent to that of a pitiful mercenary, who knows neither honour nor principle but his month's pay, who transfers his allegiance from standard to standard, at the pleasure of fortune or the highest bidder; and to whose insatiable thirst for plunder and warm quarters we owe much of that civil dissension which is now turning our swords against our own bowels. I had scarce patience with the hired gladiator, and yet could hardly help laughing at the extremity of his impudence."

"Your lordship will forgive me," said Anderson, "if I recommend to you, in the present circumstances, to conceal at least a part of this generous indignation; we cannot, unfortunately, do our work without the assistance of those who act on baser motives than our own. We cannot spare the assistance of such fellows as our friend the soldado. So use the canting phrase of the saints in the English Parliament, the sons of Zeruiah are still too many for us."

"I must dissemble, then, as well as I can," said Lord Menteith, "as I have hitherto done, upon your hint. But I wish the fellow at the devil with all my heart."

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"Ay, but still you must remember, my lord," resumed Anderson, "that to cure the bite of a scorpion, you must crush another scorpion on the wound—but stop, we shall be overheard."

From a side-door in the hall glided a Highlander into the apartment, whose lofty stature, and complete equipment, as well as the eagle's feather in his bonnet, and the confidence of his demeanour, announced to be a person of superior rank. He walked slowly up to the table, and made no answer to Lord Menteith, who, addressing him by the name of Allan, asked him how he did.

"Ye manna speak to her e'en now," whispered an old attendant.

The tall Highlander, sinking down upon the empty settle next the fire, fixed his eyes upon the red embers and the huge heap of turf, and seemed buried in profound abstraction. His dark eyes, and wild and enthusiastic features, bore the air of one who, deeply impressed with his own subjects of meditation, pays little attention to exterior objects. An air of gloomy severity, the fruit perhaps of ascetic and solitary habits, might, in a Lowlander, have been ascribed to religious fanaticism; but by that disease of the mind, then so common both in England and the Lowlands of Scotland, the Highlanders of this period were rarely infected. They had, however, their own peculiar superstitions, which overclouded the mind with thick-coming fancies, as completely as the puritanism of their neighbours.

"His lordship's honour," said the Highland servant, sideling up to Lord Menteith, and speaking in a very low tone, "his lordship manna speak to Allan even now, for the cloud is upon his mind."

Lord Menteith nodded, and took no farther notice of the reserved mountaineer.

"Said I not," asked the latter, suddenly raising his stately person upright, and looking at the domestic—"said I not that four were to come, and here stand but three on the hall floor?"

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"In troth did ye say sae, Allan," said the old Highlander, "and here's the fourth man coming clinking in at the yett e'en now from the stable, for he's shelled like a partan wi' airn on back and breast, haunch and shanks. And am I to set her chair up near the Menteith's, or down wi' the honest gentlemen at the foot of the table?"

Lord Menteith himself answered the inquiry by pointing to a seat beside his own.

"And here she comes," said Donald, as Captain Dalgetty entered the hall; "and I hope gentlemens will all take bread and cheese, as we say in the glens, until better meat be ready, until the Tiernach comes back frae the hill wi' the southern gentlefolk, and then, Dugald Cook will show himself wi' his kid and hill venison."

In the meantime, Captain Dalgetty had entered the apartment, and walking up to the seat placed next Lord Menteith, was leaning on the back of it with his arms folded. Anderson and his companion waited at the bottom of the table, in a respectful attitude, until they should receive permission to seat themselves; while three or four Highlanders, under the direction of old Donald, ran hither and thither to bring additional articles of food, or stood still to give attendance upon the guests.

In the midst of these preparations, Allan suddenly started up, and snatching a lamp from the hand of an attendant, held it close to Dalgetty's face, while he perused his features with the most heedful and grave attention.

"By my honour," said Dalgetty, half displeased, as, mysteriously shaking his head, Allan gave up the scrutiny,—"I trow that lad and I will ken each other when we meet again."

Meanwhile Allan strode to the bottom of the table, and having, by the aid of his lamp, subjected Anderson and his companion to the same investigation, stood a moment as if in deep reflection; then, touching his forehead, suddenly seized Anderson by the arm, and before he could offer any effectual resistance, half led and half dragged him to the vacant seat at the upper end, and having made a mute intimation that he should there place himself, he

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hurried the soldado with the same unceremonious precipitation to the bottom of the table. The Captain, exceedingly incensed at this freedom, endeavoured to shake Allan from him with violence; but, powerful as he was, he proved in the struggle inferior to the gigantic mountaineer, who threw him off with such violence, that after reeling a few paces, he fell at full length, and the vaulted hall rang with the clash of his armour. When he arose, his first action was to draw his sword and to fly at Allan, who, with folded arms, seemed to await his onset with the most scornful indifference. Lord Menteith and his attendants interposed to preserve peace, while the Highlanders, snatching weapons from the wall, seemed prompt to increase the broil.

"He is mad," whispered Lord Menteith, "he is perfectly mad; there is no purpose in quarrelling with him."

"If your lordship is assured that he is *non compos mentis*, said Captain Dalgetty, "the whilk his breeding and behaviour seem to testify, the matter must end here, seeing that a madman can neither give an affront, nor render honourable satisfaction. But, by my saul, if I had my provant and a bottle of Rhenish under my belt, I should have stood other ways up to him. And yet it's a pity he should be sae weak in the intellectuals, being a strong proper man of body, fit to handle pike, morgenstern,* or any other military implement whatsoever."

Peace was thus restored, and the party seated themselves agreeably to their former arrangement, with which Allan, who had now returned to his settle by the fire, and seemed once more immersed in meditation, did not again interfere. Lord Menteith, addressing the principal domestic, hastened to start some theme of conversation which might

* This was a sort of club or mace used in the earlier part of the seventeenth century in the defence of breaches and walls. When the Germans insulted a Scotch regiment then besieged in Trailsund, saying they heard there was a ship come from Denmark to them laden with tobacco pipes, "One of our soldiers," says Colonel Robert Monro, "showing them over the work a morgenstern, made of a large stock banded with iron, like the shaft of a halbert, with a round globe at the end with cross iron pikes, saith, 'here is one of the tobacco pipes, wherewith we will beat out your brains when you intend to storm us.'"

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obliterate all recollection of the fray that had taken place. "The laird is at the hill then, Donald, I understand, and some English strangers with him ?"

"At the hill he is, an it like your honour, and two Saxon calabaleros are with him sure eneugh ; and that is Sir Miles Musgrave and Christopher Hall, both from the Cumraik, as I think they call their countries."

"Hall and Musgrave ?" said Lord Menteith, looking at his attendants, "the very men that we wished to see."

"Troth," said Donald, "an' I wish I had never seen them between the een, for they're come to herry us out o' house and ha'."

"Why, Donald," said Lord Menteith, "you did not use to be so churlish of your beef and ale ; southland though they be, they'll scarce eat up all the cattle that's going on the Castle mains."

"Teil care an they did," said Donald, "and that were the warst o't, for we have a wheen canny trewsman here that wadna let us want if there was a horned beast atween this and Perth. But this is a warse job—it's nae less than a wager."

"A wager !" repeated Lord Menteith, with some surprise.

"Troth," continued Donald, to the full as eager to tell his news as Lord Menteith was curious to hear them, "as your lordship is a friend and kinsman o' the house, an' as ye'll hear eneugh o't in less than an hour, I may as weel tell ye mysell. Ye sall be pleased then to know, that when our Laird was up in England, where he gangs oftener than his friends can wish, he was biding at the house o' this Sir Miles Musgrave, an' there was putten on the table, six candlesticks, that they tell me were twice as muckle as the candlesticks in Dumblane kirk, and neither airn, brass, nor tin, but a' solid silver, nae less ;—up wi' their English pride, has sae muckle, and kens sae little how to guide it ! Sae they began to jeer the Laird, that he saw nae sic graith in his ain poor country ; and the Laird, scorning to hae his country put down without a word for its credit, swore like a gude Scotsman, that he

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had mair candlesticks, and better candlesticks, in his ain castle at hame, than were ever lighted in a hall in Cumberland, an Cumberland be the name o' the country."

"That was patriotically said," observed Lord Menteith.

"Fary true—but her honour had better hae hauden her tongue, for if ye say ony thing amang the Saxons that's a wee by ordinar, they clink ye down for a wager as fast as a Lowland smith would hammer shoon on a Highland shelty. An' so the Laird behoved either to gae back o' his word, or wager twa hundred merks; and so he e'en took the wager, rather than be shamed wi' the like o' them. And now he's like to get it to pay, and I'm thinking that's what makes him sae swear to come hame at e'en."

"Indeed," said Lord Menteith, "from my idea of your family plate, Donald, your master is certain to lose such a wager."

"Your honour may swear that; an' where he's to get the siller I kenna, although he borrowed out o' twenty purses. I advised him to pit the twa Saxon gentlemen and their servants cannily into the pit o' the tower till they gae up the bargain o' free gude-will, but the Laird winna hear reason."

Allan here started up, strode forward, and interrupted the conversation, saying to the domestic in a voice like thunder, "And how dared you to give my brother such dishonourable advice? or how dare you to say he will lose this or any other wager, which it is his pleasure to lay?"

"Troth, Allan M'Aulay," answered the old man, "it's no for my father's son to gainsay what your father's son thinks fit to say, an' so the Laird may no doubt win his wager. A' that I ken against it is, that the teil a candlestick, or ony thing like it, is in the house, except the auld airn branches that hae been here since Laird Kenneth's time, and the tin sconces that your father gar'd be made by auld Willie Winkie the tinkler, mair be token that deil an unce of siller plate is about the house at a', forby the lady's auld posset-dish, that wants the cover and ane o' the lugs."

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"Peace, old man!" said Allan, fiercely; "and do you gentlemen, if your refection is finished, leave this apartment clear; I must prepare it for the reception of these southern guests."

"Come away," said the Domestic, pulling Lord Menteith by the sleeve; "his hour is on him," said he, looking towards Allan, "and he will not be controlled."

They left the hall accordingly, Lord Menteith and the Captain being ushered one way by old Donald, and the two attendants conducted elsewhere by another Highlander. The former had scarcely reached a sort of withdrawing apartment ere they were joined by the lord of the mansion, Angus M'Aulay by name, and his English guests. Great joy was expressed by all parties, for Lord Menteith and the English gentlemen were well known to each other; and, on Lord Menteith's introduction, Captain Dalgetty was well received by the Laird. But after the first burst of hospitable congratulation was over, Lord Menteith could observe, that there was a shade of sadness on the brow of his Highland friend.

"You must have heard," said Sir Christopher Hall, "that our fine undertaking in Cumberland is all blown up. The militia would not march into Scotland, and your prick-ear'd Covenanters have been too hard for our friends in the southern shires. And so, understanding there is some stirring work here, Musgrave and I, rather than sit idle at home, are come to have a campaign among your kilts and plaids."

"I hope you have brought arms, men, and money with you," said Lord Menteith, smiling.

"Only some dozen or two of troopers, whom we left at the last Lowland village," said Musgrave, "and trouble enough we had to get them so far."

"As for money," said his companion, "we expect a small supply from our friend and host here."

The Laird now, colouring highly, took Menteith a little apart, and expressed to him his regret that he had fallen into a foolish blunder.

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"I heard it from Donald," said Lord Menteith, scarce able to suppress a smile.

"Devil take that old man," said M'Aulay, "he would tell everything, were it to cost one's life; but it's no jesting matter to you neither, my Lord, for I reckon on your friendly and fraternal benevolence, as a near kinsman of our house, to help me out with the money due to these pock-puddings; or else, to be plain wi' ye, the deil a M'Aulay will there be at the muster, for curse me if I do not turn Covenanter rather than face these fellows without paying them; and, at the best, I shall be ill enough off, getting both the scaith and the scorn."

"You may suppose, cousin," said Lord Menteith, "I am not too well equipt just now; but you may be assured I shall endeavour to help you as well as I can, for the sake of old kindred, neighbourhood, and alliance."

"Thank ye—thank ye—thank ye," reiterated M'Aulay; "and as they are to spend the money in the King's service, what signifies whether you, they, or I pay it; we are a' one man's bairns I hope? But you must help me out too with some reasonable excuse, or else I shall be for taking to Andrew Ferrara; for I like not to be treated like a liar or a braggart at my own board-end, when, God knows, I only meant to support my honour, and that of my family and country."

Donald, as they were speaking, entered, with rather a blither face than he might have been expected to wear, considering the impending fate of his master's purse and credit. "Gentlemens, her dinner is ready, *and her candles are lighted too*," said Donald, with a strong guttural emphasis on the last clause of his speech.

"What the devil can he mean?" said Musgrave, looking to his countryman.

Lord Menteith put the same question with his eyes to the Laird, which M'Aulay answered by shaking his head.

A short dispute about precedence somewhat delayed their leaving the apartment. Lord Menteith insisted upon yielding up that which belonged to his rank, on consideration of his being in his own country, and of his near connexion with the family in which they found themselves.

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The two English strangers, therefore, were first ushered into the hall, where an unexpected display awaited them. The large oaken table was spread with substantial joints of meat, and seats were placed in order for the guests. Behind every seat stood a gigantic Highlander, completely dressed and armed after the fashion of his country, holding in his right hand his drawn sword, with the point turned downwards, and in the left, a blazing torch made of the bog-pine. This wood, found in the morasses, is so full of turpentine, that, when split and dried, it is frequently used in the Highlands instead of candles. The unexpected and somewhat startling apparition was seen by the red glare of the torches, which displayed the wild features, unusual dress, and glittering arms of those who bore them, while the smoke, eddying up to the roof of the hall, overcanopied them with a volume of vapour. Ere the strangers had recovered from their surprise, Allan stept forward, and, pointing with his sheathed broad-sword to the torch-bearers, said, in a deep and stern tone of voice,—"Behold, gentlemen cavaliers, the chandeliers of my brother's house, the ancient fashion of our ancient name; not one of these men knows any law but their Chief's command—Would you dare to compare to THEM in value the richest ore that ever was dug out of the mine? How say you, cavaliers?—is your wager won or lost?"

"Lost, lost," said Musgrave gaily—"my own silver candlesticks are all melted and riding on horseback by this time, and I wish the fellows that enlisted were half as trusty as these. Here, sir," he added to the Chief, "is your money; it impairs Hall's finances and mine somewhat, but debts of honour must be settled."

"My father's curse upon my father's son," said Allan, interrupting him, "if he receive from you one penny! It is enough, that you claim no right to exact from him what is his own.

Lord Menteith eagerly supported Allan's opinion, and the elder M'Aulay readily joined, declaring the whole to be a fool's business, and not worth speaking more about.

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The Englishmen, after some courteous opposition, were persuaded to regard the whole as a joke.

"And now, Allan," said the Laird, "please to remove your candles; for, since the Saxon gentlemen have seen them, they will eat their dinner as comfortably by the light of the old tin sconces, without scomfishing them with so much smoke."

Accordingly, at a sign from Allan, the living chandeliers, recovering their broad-swords, and holding the point erect, marched out of the hall, and left the guests to enjoy their refreshment.[2]

CHAPTER V.

Thereby so fearlesse and so fell he grew,
That his own syre and maister of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid view;
And if for dread of hurt would him advise,
The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke; for he would learne
The lion stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard,) and make the libbard sterne
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did earne.

Spencer.

NOTWITHSTANDING the proverbial epicurism of the English,—proverbial, that is to say, in Scotland at the period,—the English visiters made no figure whatever at the entertainment, compared with the portentous voracity of Captain Dalgetty, although that gallant soldier had already displayed much steadiness and pertinacity in his attack upon the lighter refreshment set before them at their entrance, by way of forlorn hope. He spoke to no one during the time of his meal; and it was not until the victuals were nearly withdrawn from the table, that he gratified the rest of the company, who had watched him with

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some surprise, with an account of the reasons why he ate so very fast and so very long.

"The former quality," he said, "he had acquired, while he filled a place at the bursar's table at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen; when," said he, "if you did not move your jaws as fast as a pair of castanets, you were very unlikely to get anything to put between them. And as for the quantity of my food, be it known to this honourable company," continued the Captain, "that it's the duty of every commander of a fortress, on all occasions which offer, to secure as much munition and vivers as their magazines can possibly hold, not knowing when they may have to sustain a siege or a blockade. Upon which principle, gentlemen," said he, "when a cavalier finds that provant is good and abundant, he will, in my estimation, do wisely to victual himself for at least three days, as there is no knowing when he may come by another meal."

The Laird expressed his acquiescence in the prudence of this principle, and recommended to the veteran to add a tass of brandy and a flagon of claret to the substantial provisions he had already laid in, to which proposal the Captain readily agreed.

When dinner was removed and the servants had withdrawn, excepting the Laird's page or henchman, who remained in the apartment to call for or bring whatever was wanted, or, in a word, to answer the purposes of a modern bell-wire, the conversation began to turn upon politics, and the state of the country; and Lord Menteith inquired anxiously and particularly what clans were expected to join the proposed muster of the King's friends.

"That depends much, my lord, on the person who lifts the banner," said the Laird; "for you know we Highlanders, when a few clans are assembled, are not easily commanded by one of our own chiefs, or, to say the truth, by any other body. We have heard a rumour, indeed, that Colkitto—that is, young Colkitto, or Alaster M'Donald, is come over the Kyle from Ireland, with a body of the Earl of An-

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trim's people, and that they had got as far as Ardnamurchan. They might have been here before now, but, I suppose, they loitered to plunder the country as they came along."

"Will Colkitto not serve you for a leader, then?" said Lord Menteith.

"Colkitto!" said Allan M'Aulay, scornfully; "who talks of Colkitto?—there lives but one man whom we will follow, and that is Montrose."

"But Montrose, sir," said Sir Christopher Hall, "has not been heard of since our ineffectual attempt to rise in the north of England. It is thought he has returned to the King at Oxford for farther instructions."

"Returned!" said Allan, with a scornful laugh; "I could tell ye, but it is not worth my while; ye will know soon enough."

"By my honour, Allan," said Lord Menteith, you will weary out your friends with this intolerable, froward, and sullen humour—But I know the reason," added he, laughing; "you have not seen Annot Lyle to-day."

"Whom did you say I had not seen?" said Allan sternly.

"Annot Lyle, the fairy queen of song and minstrelsy," said Lord Menteith.

"Would to God I were never to see her again," said Allan, sighing, "on condition the same weird were laid on you!"

"And why on me?" said Lord Menteith, carelessly.

"Because," said Allan, "it is written on your forehead, that you are to be the ruin of each other." So saying, he rose up and left the room.

"Has he been long in this way?" asked Lord Menteith, addressing his brother.

"About three days," said Angus; "the fit is well nigh over, he will be better to-morrow.—But come, gentlemen, don't let the tappit-hen scraugh to be emptied. The King's health, King Charles's health! and may the covenanting dog that refuses it, go to heaven by the road of the Grassmarket!"

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The health was quickly pledged, and as fast succeeded by another, and another, and another, all of a party cast, and enforced in an earnest manner. Captain Dalgetty, however, thought it necessary to enter a protest.

"Gentlemen cavaliers," he said, "I drink these healths, *primo*, both out of respect to this honourable and hospitable roof-tree, and *secundo*, because I hold it not good to be preceese in such matters, *inter pocula;* but I protest, agreeable to the warrandice granted by this honourable lord, that it shall be free to me, notwithstanding my present complaisance, to take service with the Covenanters to-morrow, providing I shall be so minded."

M'Aulay and his English guests stared at this declaration, which would have certainly bred new disturbance, if Lord Menteith had not taken up the affair, and explained the circumstances and conditions. "I trust," he concluded, "we shall be able to secure Captain Dalgetty's assistance to our own party."

"And if not," said the Laird, "I protest as the Captain says, that nothing that has passed this evening, not even his having eaten my bread and salt, and pledged me in brandy, Bourdeaux, or usquebaugh, shall prejudice my cleaving him to the neck-bone."

"You shall be heartily welcome," said the Captain, "providing my sword cannot keep my head, which it has done in worse dangers than your feud is likely to make for me."

Here Lord Menteith again interposed, and the concord of the company being with no small difficulty restored, was cemented by some deep carouses. Lord Menteith, however, contrived to break up the party earlier than was the usage of the Castle, under pretence of fatigue and indisposition. This was somewhat to the disappointment of the valiant Captain, who, among other habits acquired in the Low Countries, had acquired both a disposition to drink, and a capacity to bear, an exorbitant quantity of strong liquors.

Their landlord ushered them in person to a sort of sleeping gallery, in which there was a four-post bed,

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with tartan curtains, and a number of cribs or long hampers, placed along the wall, three of which, well stuffed with blooming heather, were prepared for the reception of guests.

"I need not tell your lordship," said M'Aulay to Lord Menteith, a little apart, "our Highland mode of quartering. Only that, not liking you should sleep in the room alone with this German land-louper, I have caused your servants' beds to be made here in the gallery. By G—d, my lord, these are times when men go to bed with a throat hale and sound as ever swallowed brandy, and before next morning, it may be gaping like an oyster-shell."

Lord Menteith thanked him sincerely, saying, "It was just the arrangement he would have requested; for, although he had not the least apprehension of violence from Captain Dalgetty, yet Anderson was a better kind of person, a sort of gentleman, whom he always liked to have near his person.

"I have not seen this Anderson," said M'Aulay; "did you hire him in England?"

"I did so," said Lord Menteith; "you will see the man to-morrow; in the mean time I wish you good-night."

His host left the apartment after the evening salutation, and was about to pay the same compliment to Captain Dalgetty, but observing him deeply engaged in the discussion of a huge pitcher filled with brandy posset, he thought it a pity to disturb him in so laudable an employment, and took his leave without farther ceremony.

Lord Menteith's two attendants entered the apartment almost immediately after his departure. The good Captain, who was now somewhat encumbered with his good cheer, began to find the undoing of the clasps of his armour a task somewhat difficult, and addressed Anderson in these words, interrupted by a slight hiccup,—"Anderson, my good friend, you may read in Scripture, that he that putteth off his armour should not boast himself like he that putteth it on—I believe that is not the right word of command; but the plain truth of it is, I am like to

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sleep in my corslet, like many an honest fellow that never waked again, unless you unloose this buckle."

"Undo his armour, Sibbald," said Anderson to the other servant.

"By St. Andrew!" exclaimed the Captain, turning round in great astonishment, "here's a common fellow—a stipendiary with four pounds a-year and a livery cloak, thinks himself too good to serve Ritt-master Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, who has studied humanity at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen, and served half the princes of Europe!"

"Captain Dalgetty," said Lord Menteith, whose lot it was to stand peacemaker throughout the evening, "please to understand that Anderson waits upon no one but myself; but I will help Sibbald to undo your corslet with much pleasure."

"Too much trouble for you, my lord," said Dalgetty; "and yet it would do you no harm to practise how a handsome harness is put on and put off. I can step in and out of mine like a glove; only to-night, although not *ebrius*, I am, in the classic phrase, *vino ciboque gravatus*."

By this time he was unshelled, and stood before the fire, musing, with a face of drunken wisdom, on the events of the evening. What seemed chiefly to interest him, was the character of Allan M'Aulay. "To come over the Englishmen so cleverly with his Highland torch-bearers—eight bare-breeched Rories for six silver candlesticks!—it was a master-piece—a *tour de passe*—it was perfect legerdemain—and to be a madman after all!—I doubt greatly, my lord, (shaking his head,) that I must allow him, notwithstanding his relationship to your lordship, the privileges of a rational person, and either batoon him sufficiently to expiate the violence offered to my person, or else bring it to a matter of mortal arbitrement, as becometh an insulted cavalier."

"If you care to hear a long story," said Lord Menteith, "at this time of night, I can tell you how the circumstances of Allan's birth account so well for his singular

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character, as to put such satisfaction entirely out of the question."

"A long story, my lord," said Captain Dalgetty, "is next to a good evening draught and a warm night-cap, the best shoeing-horn for drawing on a sound sleep. And since your lordship is pleased to take the trouble to tell it, I shall rest your patient and obliged auditor."

"Anderson," said Lord Menteith, "and you, Sibbald, are dying to hear, I suppose, of this strange man too; and I believe I must indulge your curiosity, that you may know how to behave to him in time of need. You had better step to the fire then."

Having thus assembled an audience about him, Lord Menteith sat down upon the edge of the four-post bed, while Captain Dalgetty, wiping the relics of the posset from his beard and mustachoes, and repeating the first verse of the Lutheran psalm, *Alle guter geister loben den Herrn*, &c. rolled himself into one of the places of repose, and thrusting his shock pate from between the blankets, listened to Lord Menteith's relation in a most luxurious state between sleeping and waking.

"The father," said Lord Menteith, of the two brothers, Angus and Allan M'Aulay, was a gentleman of consideration and family, being the chief of a Highland clan, of good account, though not numerous; his lady, the mother of these young men, was a gentlewoman of good family, if I may be permitted to say so of one nearly connected with my own. Her brother, an honourable and spirited young man, obtained from James the Sixth a grant of forestry, and other privileges, over a royal chase adjacent to this castle; and in exercising and defending these rights, he was so unfortunate as to involve himself in a quarrel with some of our Highland freebooters or caterans, of whom, I think, Captain Dalgetty, you must have heard."

"And that I have," said the Captain, exerting himself to answer the appeal. "Before I left the Mareschal College of Aberdeen, Dugald Garr was playing the devil

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in the Garioch, and the Farquharsons on Dee-side, and the Clan Chattan on the Gordons' lands, and the Grants and Camerons in Moray-land. And since that, I have seen the Cravats and Pandours in Pannonia and Transylvania, and the Cossacks from the Polish frontier, and robbers, banditti, and barbarians of all countries besides, so that I have a distinct idea of your broken Highlandmen."

"The clan," said Lord Menteith, "with whom the maternal uncle of the M'Aulays had been placed in feud, was a small sept of banditti, called, from their houseless state, and their incessantly wandering among the mountains and glens, the Children of the Mist. They are a fierce and hardy people, with all the irritability, and wild and vengeful passions, proper to men who have never known the restraint of civilized society. A party of them lay in wait for the unfortunate Warden of the Forest, surprised him while hunting alone and unattended, and slew him with every circumstance of inventive cruelty. They cut off his head, and resolved, in a bravado, to exhibit it at the castle of his brother-in-law. The laird was absent, and the lady reluctantly received as guests, men against whom, perhaps, she was afraid to shut her gates. Refreshments were placed before the Children of the Mist, who took an opportunity to take the head of their victim from the plaid in which it was wrapped, placed it on the table, put a piece of bread between the lifeless jaws, bidding them do their office now, since many a good meal they had eaten at that table. The lady, who had been absent for some household purpose, entered at this moment, and, upon beholding her brother's head, fled like an arrow out of the house into the woods, uttering shriek upon shriek. The ruffians, satisfied with this savage triumph, withdrew. The terrified menials, after overcoming the alarm to which they had been subjected, sought their unfortunate mistress in every direction, but she was nowhere to be found. The miserable husband returned next day, and, with the assistance of his people, undertook a more anxious and distant search, but to equally

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little purpose. It was believed universally, that, in the ecstasy of her terror, she must either have thrown herself over one of the numerous precipices which overhang the river, or into a deep lake about a mile from the castle. Her loss was the more lamented, as she was six months advanced in her pregnancy; Angus M'Aulay, her eldest son, having been born about eighteen months before.—But I tire you, Captain Dalgetty; and you seem inclined to sleep."

"By no means," answered the soldier; "I am no whit somnolent; I always hear best with my eyes shut. It is a fashion I learned when I stood sentinel."

"And I dare say," said Lord Menteith, aside to Anderson, "the weight of the halbert of the sergeant of the rounds often made him open them."

Being apparently, however, in the humour of story-telling, the young nobleman went on, addressing himself chiefly to his servants, without minding the slumbering veteran.

"Every baron in the country," said he, "now swore revenge for this dreadful crime. They took arms with the relations and brother-in-law of the murdered person, and the Children of the Mist were hunted down, I believe, with as little mercy as they had themselves manifested. Seventeen heads, the bloody trophies of their vengeance, were distributed among the allies, and fed the crows upon the gates of their castles. The survivors sought out more distant wildernesses, to which they retreated."

"To your right hand, counter-march and retreat to your former ground," said Captain Dalgetty; the military phrase having produced the correspondent word of command; and then starting up, professed he had been profoundly attentive to every word that had been spoken.

"It is the custom in summer," said Lord Menteith, without attending to his apology, "to send the cows to the upland pastures to have the benefit of the grass; and the maids of the village, and of the family, go there to milk them in the morning and evening. While thus employed

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the females of this family, to their great terror, perceived that their motions were watched at a distance by a pale, thin, meagre figure, bearing a strong resemblance to their deceased mistress, and passing, of course, for her apparition. When some of the boldest resolved to approach this faded form, it fled from them into the woods with a wild shriek. The husband, informed of this circumstance, came up to the glen with some attendants, and took his measures so well as to intercept the retreat of the unhappy fugitive, and to secure the person of his unfortunate lady, though her intellect proved to be totally deranged. How she supported herself during her wandering in the woods could not be known—some supposed she lived upon roots and wild-berries, with which the woods at that season abounded; but the greater part of the vulgar were satisfied that she must have subsisted upon the milk of the wild does, or been nourished by the fairies, or supported in some manner equally marvellous. Her reappearance was more easily accounted for. She had seen from the thicket the milking of the cows, to superintend which had been her favourite domestic employment, and the habit had prevailed even in her deranged state of mind.

"In due season the unfortunate lady was delivered of a boy, who not only showed no appearance of having suffered from his mother's calamities, but appeared to be an infant of uncommon health and strength. The unhappy mother, after her confinement, recovered her reason —at least in a great measure, but never her health and spirits. Allan was her only joy. Her attention to him was unremitting; and unquestionably she must have impressed upon his early mind many of those superstitious ideas to which his moody and enthusiastic temper gave so ready a reception. She died when he was about ten years old. Her last words were spoken to him in private; but there is little doubt that they conveyed an injunction of vengeance upon the Children of the Mist, with which he has since amply complied.

"From this moment the habits of Allan M'Aulay were totally changed. He had hitherto been his mother's con-

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stant companion, listening to her dreams, and repeating his own, and feeding his imagination, which, probably from the circumstances preceding his birth, was constitutionally deranged, with all the wild and terrible superstitions so common to the mountaineers, to which his unfortunate mother had become much addicted since her brother's death. By living in this manner, the boy had gotten a timid, wild, startled look, loved to seek out solitary places in the woods, and was never so much terrified as by the approach of children of the same age. I remember, although some years younger, being brought up here by my father upon a visit, nor can I forget the astonishment with which I saw this infant-hermit shun every attempt I made to engage him in the sports natural to our age. I can remember his father bewailing his disposition to mine, and alleging, at the same time, that it was impossible for him to take from his wife the company of the boy, as he seemed to be the only consolation that remained to her in this world, and as the amusement which Allan's society afforded her seemed to prevent the recurrence, at least in its full force, of that fearful malady by which she had been visited. But, after the death of his mother, the habits and manners of the boy seemed at once to change. It is true he remained as thoughtful and serious as before; and long fits of silence and abstraction showed plainly that his disposition, in this respect was in no degree altered. But at other times, he sought out the rendezvous of the youth of the clan, which he had hitherto seemed anxious to avoid. He took share in all their exercises; and, from his very extraordinary personal strength, soon excelled his brother and other youths, whose age considerably exceeded his own. They who had hitherto held him in contempt, now feared, if they did not love him; and, instead of Allan's being esteemed a dreaming, womanish, and feeble-minded boy, those who encountered him in sports or military exercise, now complained, that, when heated by the strife, he was too apt to turn game into earnest, and to forget that he was only engaged in a friendly trial of strength.—But I speak to

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regardless ears," said Lord Menteith, interrupting himself, for the Captain's nose now gave the most indisputable signs that he was fast locked in the arms of oblivion.

"If you mean the ears of that snorting swine, my lord," said Anderson, "they are, indeed, shut to any thing that you can say; nevertheless, this place being unfit for more private conference, I hope you will have the goodness to proceed, for Sibbald's benefit and for mine. The history of this poor young fellow has a deep and wild interest in it."

"You must know, then," proceeded Lord Menteith, "that Allan continued to increase in strength and activity till his fifteenth year, about which time he assumed a total independence of character, and impatience of control, which much alarmed his surviving parent. He was absent in the woods for whole days and nights, under pretence of hunting, though he did not always bring home game. His father was the more alarmed, because several of the Children of the Mist, encouraged by the increasing troubles of the state, had ventured back to their old haunts, nor did he think it altogether safe to renew any attack upon them. The risk of Allan, in his wanderings, sustaining injury from these vindictive freebooters, was a perpetual source of apprehension.

"I was myself upon a visit to the castle when this matter was brought to a crisis. Allan had been absent since daybreak in the woods, where I had sought for him in vain; it was a dark stormy night, and he did not return. His father expressed the utmost anxiety, and spoke of detaching a party at the dawn of morning in quest of him; when, as we were sitting at the supper-table, the door suddenly opened, and Allan entered the room with a proud, firm, and confident air. His intractability of temper, as well as the unsettled state of his mind, had such an influence over his father, that he suppressed all other tokens of displeasure, excepting the observation that I had killed a fat buck, and had returned before sunset, while he supposed Allan, who had been on the hill till midnight, had returned with empty hands. 'Are you

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sure of that?' said Allan fiercely; 'here is something will tell you another tale.'

"We now observed his hands were bloody, and that there were spots of blood on his face, and waited the issue with impatience; when suddenly, undoing the corner of his plaid, he rolled down on the table a human head, bloody and new severed, saying, at the same time, 'Lie thou where the head of a better man lay before ye.' From the haggard features, and matted red hair and beard, partly grizzled with age, his father and others present recognized the head of Hector of the Mist, a well-known leader among the outlaws, redoubted for strength and ferocity, who had been active in the murder of the unfortunate forester, uncle to Allan, and had escaped by a desperate defence and extraordinary agility, when so many of his companions were destroyed. We were all, it may be believed, struck with surprise, but Allan refused to gratify our curiosity; and we only conjectured that he must have overcome the outlaw after a desperate struggle, because we discovered that he had sustained several wounds from the contest. All measures were now taken to ensure him against the vengeance of the freebooters; but neither his wounds, nor the positive command of his father, nor even the locking the gates of the castle and the doors of his apartment, were precautions adequate to prevent Allan from seeking out the very persons to whom he was peculiarly obnoxious. He made his escape by night from the window of the apartment, and laughing at his father's vain care, produced on one occasion the head of one, and upon another those of two of the Children of the Mist. At length these men, fierce as they were, became appalled by the inveterate animosity and audacity with which Allan sought out their recesses. As he never hesitated to encounter any odds, they concluded that he must bear a charmed life, or fight under the guardianship of some supernatural influence. Neither gun, dirk, nor dourlach,[4] they said, availed aught against him. They imputed this to the remarkable circumstances under which he was

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born; and at length five or six of the stoutest caterans of the Highlands would have fled at Allan's halloo, or the blast of his horn. In the meanwhile, however, the Children of the Mist carried on their old trade, and did the M'Aulays, as well as their kinsmen and allies, as much mischief as they could. This provoked another expedition against the tribe, in which I had my share; we surprised them effectually, by besetting at once the upper and under passes of the country, and made such clean work as is usual on these occasions, burning and slaying right before us. In this terrible species of war, even the females and the helpless do not always escape. One little maiden alone, who smiled upon Allan's drawn dirk, escaped his vengeance upon my earnest entreaty. She was brought to the castle, and here bred up under the name of Annot Lyle, the most beautiful little fairy, certainly, that ever danced upon a heath by moonlight. It was long ere Allan could endure the presence of the child, until it occurred to his imagination, from her features perhaps, that she did not belong to the hated blood of his enemies, but had become their captive in some of their incursions; a circumstance not in itself impossible, but in which he believes as firmly as in holy writ. He is particularly delighted by her skill in music, which is so exquisite, that she far exceeds the best performers in this country in playing on the clairshach or harp. It was discovered that this produced upon the disturbed spirits of Allan, in his gloomiest moods, beneficial effects, similar to those experienced by the Jewish monarch of old; and so engaging is the temper of Annot Lyle, so fascinating the innocence and gaiety of her disposition, that she is considered and treated in the castle rather as the sister of the proprietor, than as the dependant upon his charity. Indeed, it is impossible for any one to see her without being deeply interested by the ingenuity, liveliness, and sweetness of her disposition.

"Take care, my lord," said Anderson, smiling; "there is danger in such violent commendations. Allan

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M'Aulay, as your lordship describes him, would prove no very safe rival."

"Pooh! pooh!" said Lord Menteith, laughing, yet blushing at the same time; "Allan is not accessible to the passion of love; and for myself," said he more gravely, "Annot's unknown birth is a sufficient reason against serious designs, and her unprotected state precludes every other."

"It is spoken like yourself, my lord," said Anderson. "But I trust you will proceed with your interesting story."

"It is well nigh finished," said Lord Menteith; "I have only to add, that from the great strength and courage of Allan M'Aulay, from his energetic and uncontrollable disposition, and from an opinion generally entertained and encouraged by himself, that he holds communion with supernatural beings, and can predict future events, the clan pay a much greater degree of deference to him than even to his brother, who is a bold-hearted rattling Highlander, but with nothing which can possibly rival the extraordinary character of his younger brother."

"Such a character," said Anderson, "cannot but have the deepest effect on the minds of a Highland host. We must secure Allan, my lord, at all events. What between his bravery and his second sight——"

"Hush!" said Lord Menteith, "that owl is awaking."

"Do you talk of the second sight, or *deuteroscopia*?" said the soldier; "I remember memorable Major Monro telling me how Murdoch Mackenzie, born in Assint, a private gentleman in a company, and a pretty soldier, foretold the death of Donald Tough, a Lochaber man, and certain other persons, as well as the hurt of the Major himself at a sudden onfall at the siege of Trailsund."

"I have often heard of this faculty," observed Anderson, "but I have always thought those pretending to it were either enthusiasts or impostors."

"I should be loath," said Lord Menteith, "to apply either character to my kinsman, Allan M'Aulay. He has shown on many occasions too much acuteness and

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sense, of which you this night had an instance, for the character of an enthusiast; and his high sense of honour, and manliness of disposition, free him from the charge of imposture."

"Your lordship, then," said Anderson, "is a believer in his supernatural attributes?"

"By no means," said the young nobleman; "I think that he persuades himself that the predictions which are, in reality, the result of judgment and reflection, are supernatural impressions on his mind, just as fanatics conceive the workings of their own imagination to be divine inspiration—at least, if this will not serve you, Anderson, I have no better explanation to give; and it is time we were all asleep after the toilsome journey of the day."

CHAPTER VI.

Coming events cast their shadows before.
Campbell.

At an early hour in the morning the guests of the castle sprung from their repose; and, after a moment's private conversation with his attendants, Lord Menteith addressed the soldier, who was seated in a corner burnishing his corslet with rot-stone and shamois-leather, while he hummed the old song in honour of the victorious Gustavus Adolphus:—

When cannons are roaring, and bullets are flying,
The lad that would have honour, boys, must never fear dying.

"Captain Dalgetty," said Lord Menteith, "the time is come that we must part, or become comrades in service."

"Not before breakfast, I hope?" said Captain Dalgetty.

"I should have thought," replied his lordship, "that your garrison was victualled for three days at least."

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"I have still some stowage left for beef and bannocks," said the Captain; "and I never miss a favourable opportunity of renewing my supplies."

"But," said Lord Menteith, "no judicious commander allows either flags of truce or neutrals to remain in his camp longer than is prudent; and therefore we must know your mind exactly, according to which you shall either have a safe-conduct to depart in peace, or be welcome to remain with us."

"Truly," said the Captain, "that being the case, I will not attempt to protract the capitulation by a counterfeited parley, (a thing excellently practised by Sir James Ramsay at the siege of Hannau, in the year of God, 1636,) but I will frankly own, that if I like your pay as well as your provant and your company, I care not how soon I take the oath to your colours."

"Our pay," said Lord Menteith, "must at present be small, since it is paid out of the common stock raised by the few amongst us who can command some funds—as major and adjutant, I dare not promise Captain Dalgetty more than half a dollar a-day."

"The devil take all halves and quarters!" said the Captain; "were it in my option, I could no more consent to the halving of that dollar, than the woman in the judgment of Solomon to the disseverment of the child of her bowels."

"The parallel will scarce hold, Captain Dalgetty; for I think you would rather consent to the dividing of the dollar, than give it up entire to your competitor. However, in the way of arrears, I may promise you the other half-dollar at the end of the campaign."

"Ah! these arrearages," said Captain Dalgetty, "that are always promised, and always go for nothing! Spain, Austria, and Sweden, all sing one song. Oh! long life to the Hoganmogans! if they were no officers or soldiers, they were good pay-masters. And yet, my lord, if I could but be made certiorate that my natural hereditament of Drumthwacket had fallen into possession of any of these loons of Covenanters, who could be, in

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the event of our success, conveniently made a traitor of, I have so much value for that fertile and pleasant spot, that I would e'en take on with you for the campaign.'

"I can resolve Captain Dalgetty's question," said Sibbald, Lord Menteith's second attendant; "for if his estate of Drumthwacket be, as I conceive, the long waste moor so called, that lies five miles south of Aberdeen, I can tell him it was lately purchased by Elias Strachan, as rank a rebel as ever swore the Covenant."

"The crop-eared hound!" said Captain Dalgetty, in a rage; "what the devil gave him the assurance to purchase the inheritance of a family of four hundred years standing?—*Cynthias aurem vellet*, as we used to say at Mareschal-College, that is to say, I will pull him out of my father's house by the ears. And so, my Lord Menteith, I am yours, hand and sword, body and soul, till death do us part, or to the end of the next campaign, whichever event shall first come to pass."

"And I," said the young nobleman, "rivet the bargain by a month's pay in advance."

"That is more than necessary," said Dalgetty, pocketting the money however. "But now I must go down, look after my war-saddle and abuilziements, and see that Gustavus has his morning, and tell him we have taken new service."

"There goes your precious recruit," said Lord Menteith to Anderson, as the Captain left the room; "I fear we shall have little credit of him."

"He is a man of the times, however," said Anderson; "and without such we should hardly be able to carry on our enterprize."

"Let us go down," answered Lord Menteith, "and see how our muster is likely to thrive, for I hear a good deal of bustle in the castle."

When they entered the hall, the domestics keeping modestly in the back-ground, morning greetings passed between Lord Menteith, Angus M'Aulay, and his English guests, while Allan, occupying the same settle which he

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had filled the preceding evening, paid no attention whatever to any one.

Old Donald hastily rushed into the apartment. "A message from Vich Alister More;[4] he is coming up in the evening."

"With how many attendants?" said M'Aulay.

"Some five-and-twenty or thirty," said Donald, "his ordinary retinue."

"Shake down plenty of straw in the great barn," said the Laird.

"Another servant here stumbled hastily in, announcing the expected approach of Sir Hector M'Lean, "Who is arriving with a large following."

"Put them in the malt-kiln," said M'Aulay; 'and keep the breadth of the middenstead between them and the M'Donalds; they are but unfriends to each other."

Donald now re-entered, his visage considerably lengthened—"The tiel's i' the folk," he said; "the haill Hielands are asteer, I think. Evan Dhu, of Lochiel, will be here in an hour, with Lord kens how many gillies."

"Into the great barn with them beside the M'Donalds," said the Laird.

More and more Chiefs were announced, the least of whom would have accounted it derogatory to his dignity to stir without a retinue of six or seven persons. To every new annunciation, Angus M'Aulay answered by naming some place of accommodation,—the stables, the loft, the cow-house, the sheds, every domestic office, were destined for the night to some hospitable purpose or other. At length the arrival of M'Dougal of Lorn, after all his means of accommodation were exhausted, reduced him to some perplexity. "What the devil is to be done, Donald?" said he; "the great barn would hold fifty more, if they would lie heads and thraws; but there would be drawn dirks amang them which should lie uppermost, and so we should have bloody puddings before morning!"

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"What needs all this?" said Allan, starting up, and coming forward with the stern abruptness of his usual manner; "are the Gael to-day of softer flesh or whiter blood than their fathers were? Knock the head out of a cask of usquebæ; let that be their night-gear—their plaids their bed-clothes—the blue sky their canopy, and the heather their couch.—Come a thousand more, and they would not quarrel on the broad heath for want of room!"

"Allan is right," said his brother; "it is very odd how Allan, who, between ourselves," said he to Musgrave, "is a little wowf,[5] seems at times to have more sense than us all put together. Observe him now."

"Yes," continued Allan, fixing his eyes with a ghastly stare upon the opposite side of the hall, "they may well begin as they are to end; many a man will sleep this night upon the heath, that, when the Martinmas wind shall blow, shall lie there stark enough, and reck little of cold or lack of covering."

"Do not forespeak us, brother," said Angus; "that is not lucky."

"And what luck is it then that you expect?" said Allan; and straining his eyes until they almost started from their sockets, he fell with a convulsive shudder into the arms of Donald and his brother, who, knowing the nature of his fits, had come near to prevent his fall. They seated him upon a bench, and supported him until he came to himself, and was about to speak.

"For God's sake, Allan," said his brother, who knew the impression his mystical words were likely to make on many of the guests, "say nothing to discourage us."

"Am I he who discourages you?" said Allan; "let every man face his weird as I shall face mine. That which must come, will come; and we shall stride gallantly over many a field of victory, ere we reach yon fatal slaughter-place, or tread yon sable scaffolds!"

"What slaughter-place? what scaffolds?" exclaimed several voices; for Allan's renown as a seer was generally established in the Highlands.

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"You will know that but too soon," answered Allan. "Speak to me no more, I am weary of your questions." He then pressed his hand against his brow, rested his elbow upon his knee, and sunk into a deep reverie.

"Send for Annot Lyle, and the harp," said Angus, in a whisper, to his servant; "and let those gentlemen follow me, who do not fear a Highland breakfast."

All accompanied their hospitable landlord excepting only Lord Menteith, who lingered in one of the deep embrasures formed by the windows of the hall. Annot Lyle shortly after glided into the room, not ill described by Lord Menteith as being the lightest and most fairy figure that ever trod the turf by moonlight. Her stature, considerably less than the ordinary size of women, gave her the appearance of extreme youth, insomuch, that, although she was near eighteen, she might have passed for four years younger. Her figure, hands, and feet, were formed upon a model of exquisite symmetry with the size and lightness of her person, so that Titania herself could scarce have found a more fitting representative. Her hair was a dark shade of the colour usually termed flaxen, whose clustering ringlets suited admirably with her fair complexion, and with the playful, yet simple expression of her features. When we add to these charms, that Annot, in her orphan state, seemed the gayest and happiest of maidens, the reader must allow us to claim for her the interest of almost all who looked on her. In fact, it was impossible to find a more universal favourite, and she often came among the rude inhabitants of the castle, as Allan himself, in a poetical mood, expressed it, "like a sun-beam on a sullen sea," communicating to all others the cheerfulness that filled her own mind.

Annot, such as we have described her, smiled and blushed, when, on entering the apartment, Lord Menteith came from his place of retirement, and kindly wished her good-morning.

"And good-morning to you, my lord," returned she, extending her hand to her friend; "we have seldom

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seen you of late at the castle, and now I fear it is with no peaceful purpose."

"At least let me not interrupt your harmony, Annot," said Lord Menteith, "though my arrival may breed discord elsewhere. My cousin Allan needs the assistance of your voice and music."

"My preserver," said Annot Lyle, "has a right to my poor exertions; and you, too, my lord,—you, too, are my preserver, and were the most active to save a life that is worthless enough, unless it can benefit my protectors."

So saying, she sat down at a little distance upon the bench on which Allan M'Aulay was placed, and tuning her clairshach, a small harp, about thirty inches in height, she accompanied it with her voice. The air was an ancient Gaelic melody, and the words, which were supposed to be very old, were in the same language; but we subjoin a translation of them, by Secundus M'Pherson, Esq. of Glenforgen, which, although submitted to the fetters of English rhythm, we trust will be found nearly as genuine as the version of Ossian by his celebrated namesake.

1.

"Birds of omen dark and foul,
Night-crow, raven, bat, and owl,
Leave the sick man to his dream—
All night long he heard your scream—
Haste to cave and ruined tower,
Ivy, tod, or dingled bower,
There to wink and mope, for, hark!
In the mid air sings the lark.

2.

"Hie to moorish gills and rocks,
Prowling wolf and wily fox,—
Hie you fast, nor turn your view,
Though the lamb bleats to the ewe.
Couch your trains, and speed your flight,
Safety parts with parting night;
And on distant echo born,
Comes the hunter's early horn.

3.

"The moon's wan crescent scarcely gleams,
Ghost-like she fades in morning beams;

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Hie hence each peevish imp and fay,
That scare the pilgrim on his way :—
Quench, kelpy ! quench, in bog and fen,
Thy torch that cheats benighted men ;
Thy dance is o'er, thy reign is done,
For Benyieglo hath seen the sun.

4.

" Wild thoughts, that, sinful, dark, and deep,
O'erpower the passive mind in sleep,
Pass from the slumberer's soul away,
Like night-mists from the brow of day :
Foul hag, whose blasted visage grim
Smothers the pulse, unnerves the limb,
Spur thy dark palfrey, and begone !
Thou darest not face the godlike sun."

As the strain proceeded, Allan M'Aulay gradually gave signs of recovering his presence of mind and attention to the objects around him. The deep-knit furrows of his brow relaxed and smoothed themselves ; and the rest of his features, which had seemed contorted with internal agony, relapsed into a more natural state. When he raised his head and sat upright, his countenance, though still deeply melancholy, was divested of its wildness and ferocity ; and in its composed state, although by no means handsome, the expression of his features was striking, manly, and even noble. His thick, brown eyebrows, which had hitherto been drawn close together, were now slightly separated, as in the natural state ; and his grey eyes, which had rolled and flashed from under them with an unnatural and portentous gleam, now recovered a steady and determined expression.

" Thank God !" he said, after sitting silent for about a minute, until the very last sounds of the harp had ceased to vibrate, " my soul is no longer darkened—the mist hath passed from my spirit."

" You owe thanks, cousin Allan," said Lord Menteith, coming forward, " to Annot Lyle, as well as to heaven, for this happy change in your melancholy mood."

" My noble cousin Menteith," said Allan, rising and greeting him very respectfully, as well as kindly, " has

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known my unhappy circumstances so long, that his goodness will require no excuse for my being thus late in bidding him welcome to the castle."

"We are too old acquaintances, Allan," said Lord Menteith, "and too good friends, to stand on the ceremonial of outward greeting; but half the Highlands will be here to-day, and you know, with our mountain chiefs, ceremony must not be neglected. What will you give little Annot for making you fit company to meet Evan Dhu, and I know not how many bonnets and feathers?"

"What will he give me?" said Annot, smiling; "nothing less, I hope, than the best ribbon at the fair of Doune."

"The fair of Doune, Annot?" said Allan, sadly; "there will be bloody work before that day, and I may never see it; but you have well reminded me of what I have long intended to do."

Having said this, he left the room.

"Should he talk long in this manner," said Lord Menteith, "you must keep your harp in tune, my dear Annot."

"I hope not," said Annot, anxiously; "this fit has been a long one, and probably will not soon return. It is fearful to see a mind, naturally generous and affectionate, afflicted by this constitutional malady."

As she spoke in a low and confidential tone, Lord Menteith naturally drew close, and stooped forward, that he might the better catch the sense of what she said. When Allan suddenly entered the apartment, they as naturally drew back from each other with a manner expressive of consciousness, as if surprised in a conversation which they wished to keep secret from him. This did not escape Allan's observation; he stopped short at the door of the apartment—his brows were contracted—his eyes rolled; but it was only the paroxysm of a moment. He passed his broad sinewy hand across his brow, as if to obliterate these signs of emotion, and advanced towards Annot, holding in his hand a very small box made of oak-wood, curiously inlaid. "I take you to witness," he

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said, "cousin Menteith, that I give this box and its contents to Annot Lyle. It contains a few ornaments that belonged to my poor mother—of trifling value you may guess, for the wife of a Highland laird has seldom a rich jewel-casket."

"But these ornaments," said Annot Lyle, gently and timidly refusing the box, "belong to the family—I cannot accept"——

"They belong to me alone, Annot," said Allan, interrupting her; "they were my mother's dying bequest. They are all I can call my own, except my plaid and my claymore. Take them, therefore—they are to me valueless trinkets—and keep them for my sake—should I never return from these wars."

So saying, he opened the case, and presented it to Annot. "If," said he, "they are of any value, dispose of them for your own support, when this house has been consumed with hostile fire, and can no longer afford you protection. But keep one ring in memory of Allan, who has done to requite your kindness, if not all he wished, at least all he could."

Annot Lyle endeavoured in vain to restrain the gathering tears, when she said, "*One* ring, Allan, I will accept from you as a memorial of your goodness to a poor orphan, but do not press me to take more; for I cannot, and will not, accept a gift of such disproportioned value."

"Make your choice then," said Allan; "your delicacy may be well founded; the others will assume a shape in which they may be more useful to you."

"Think not of it," said Annot, choosing from the contents of the casket a ring, apparently the most trifling in value which it contained; "keep them for your own, or your brother's bride.—But, good heavens!" she said, interrupting herself, and looking at the ring, "what is this that I have chosen!"

Allan hastened to look upon it, with eyes of gloomy apprehension; it bore, in enamel, a death's head above two crossed daggers. When Allan recognized the device, he uttered a sigh so deep, that she dropped the ring

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from her hand, which rolled upon the floor. Lord Menteith picked it up, and returned it to the terrified Annot.

"I take God to witness," said Allan, in a solemn tone, "that your hand, young lord, and not mine, has again delivered to her this ill-omened gift. It was the mourning ring worn by my mother in memorial of her murdered brother."

"I fear no omens," said Annot, smiling through her tears; "and nothing coming through the hands of my two patrons,"—so she was wont to call Lord Menteith and Allan,—"can bring bad luck to the poor orphan."

She put the ring on her finger, and turning to her harp, sung, to a lively air, the following verses of one of the fashionable songs of the period, which had found its way, marked as it was with the quaint hyperbolical taste of King Charles's time, from some court masque to the wilds of Perthshire:—

"Gaze not upon the stars, fond sage,
In them no influence lies:
To read the fate of youth or age,
Look on my Helen's eyes.

"Yet, rash astrologer, refrain!
Too dearly would be won
The prescience of another's pain,
If purchased by thine own."

"She is right, Allan," said Lord Menteith; "and this end of an old song is worth all we shall gain by our attempt to look into futurity."

"She is wrong, my lord," said Allan, sternly, "though you, who treat with lightness the warnings I have given you, may not live to see the event of the omen. Laugh not so scornfully," he added, interrupting himself, "or rather laugh on as loud and as long as you will; your term of laughter will find a pause ere long."

"I care not for your visions, Allan," said Lord Menteith; "however short my span of life, the eye of no Highland seer can see its termination."

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"For Heaven's sake!" said Annot Lyle, interrupting him, "you know his nature, and how little he can endure"——

"Fear me not," said Allan, interrupting her,—"my mind is now constant and calm.—But for you, young lord," said he, turning to Lord Menteith, "my eye has sought you through fields of battle, where Highlanders and Lowlanders lay strewed as thick as ever the rooks sat on those ancient trees," pointing to a rookery which was seen from the window—"my eye sought you, but your corpse was not there—my eye sought you among a train of unresisting and disarmed captives, drawn up within the bounding walls of an ancient and rugged fortress;—flash after flash—platoon after platoon—the hostile shot fell amongst them, they dropped like the dry leaves in autumn, but you were not among their ranks;—scaffolds were prepared—blocks were arranged, saw-dust was spread—the priest was ready with his book, the headsman with his axe—but there, too, mine eye found you not."

"The gibbet, then, I suppose, must be my doom?" said Lord Menteith. "Yet I wish they had spared me the halter, were it but for the dignity of the peerage."

He spoke this scornfully, yet not without a sort of curiosity, and a wish to receive an answer; for the desire of prying into futurity frequently has some influence even on the minds of those who disavow all belief in the possibility of such predictions.

"Your rank, my lord, will suffer no dishonour in your person, or by the manner of your death. Three times have I seen a Highlander plant his dirk in your bosom—and such will be your fate."

"I wish you would describe him to me," said Lord Menteith, "and I shall save him the trouble of fulfilling your prophecy, if his plaid be passable to sword or pistol."

"Your weapons," said Allan, "would avail you little; nor can I give you the information you desire. The face of the vision has been ever averted from me."

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"So be it then," said Lord Menteith, "and let it rest in the uncertainty in which your augury has placed it. I shall dine not the less merrily among plaids, and dirks, and kilts to-day."

"It may be so," said Allan; "and, it may be, you do well to enjoy these moments, which to me are poisoned by auguries of future evil. But I," he continued—"I repeat to you, that this weapon—that is, such a weapon as this," touching the hilt of the dirk which he wore, "carries your fate."

"In the meanwhile," said Lord Menteith, "you, Allan, have frightened the blood from the cheeks of Annot Lyle—let us leave this discourse, my friend, and go to see what we both understand,—the progress of our military preparations."

They joined Angus M'Aulay and his English guests, and, in the military discussions which immediately took place, Allan showed a clearness of mind, strength of judgment, and precision of thought, totally inconsistent with the mystical light in which his character has been hitherto exhibited.

CHAPTER VII.

When Albin her claymore indignantly draws,
When her bonneted chieftains around her shall crowd,
Clan-Ranald the dauntless, and Moray the proud,
All plaided and plumed in their tartan array—

Lochiel's Warning.

WHOEVER saw that morning the castle of Darnlinvarach, beheld a busy and a gallant sight.

The various Chiefs, arriving with their different retinues, which, notwithstanding their numbers, formed no more than their usual equipage and body-guard upon occasions of solemnity, saluted the lord of the castle and each other with overflowing kindness, or with haughty and distant politeness, according to the circumstances of

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friendship or hostility in which their clans had recently stood to each other. Each Chief, however small his comparative importance, showed the full disposition to exact from the rest the deference due to a separate and independent prince; while the stronger and more powerful, divided among themselves by recent contentions or ancient feuds, were constrained in policy to use great deference to the feelings of their less powerful brethren, in order, in case of need, to attach as many well-wishers as might be to their own interest and standard. Thus the meeting of Chiefs resembled not a little those ancient Diets of the Empire, where the smallest *Frey-Graf*, who possessed a castle perched upon a barren crag, with a few hundred acres around it, claimed the state and honours of a sovereign prince, and a seat according to his rank among the dignitaries of the empire.

The followers of the different leaders were separately arranged and accommodated, as room and circumstances best permitted, each retaining, however, his henchman, who waited, close as the shadow, upon his person, to execute whatever might be required by his patron.

The exterior of the castle afforded a singular scene. The Highlanders, from different islands, glens, and straths, eyed each other at a distance with looks of emulation, inquisitive curiosity, or hostile malevolence; but the most astounding part of the assembly, at least to a Lowland ear, was the rival performance of the bagpipers. These warlike minstrels, who had the highest opinion each of the superiority of his own tribe, joined to the most overweening idea of the importance connected with his profession, at first performed their various pibrochs in front each of his own clan. At length, however, as the black-cocks towards the end of the season, when, in sportsman's language, they are said to flock or crowd, attracted together by the sound of each other's triumphant crow, even so did the pipers, swelling their plaids and tartans in the same triumphant manner in which the birds ruffle up their feathers, begin to approach each other within such distance as might give to their brethren a sample of their skill. Walk-

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ing within a short interval, and eyeing each other with looks in which self-importance and defiance might be traced, they strutted, puffed, and plied their screaming instruments, each playing his own favourite tune with such a din, that if an Italian musician had lain buried within ten miles of them, he must have risen from the dead to run out of hearing.

The Chieftains meanwhile had assembled in close conclave in the great hall of the castle. Among them were the persons of the greatest consequence in the Highlands, some of them attracted by zeal for the royal cause, and many by aversion to that severe and general domination which the Marquis of Argyle, since his rising to such influence in the state, had exercised over his Highland neighbours. That statesman, indeed, though possessed of considerable abilities, and great power, had failings which rendered him unpopular among the Highland chiefs. The devotion which he professed was of a morose and fanatical character; his ambition appeared to be insatiable, and inferior chiefs complained of his want of bounty and liberality. Add to this, that although a Highlander, and of a family distinguished for valour before and since, Gillespie Grumach[6] (which, from an obliquity in his eyes, was the personal distinction he bore in the Highlands, where titles of rank are unknown) was suspected of being a better man in the cabinet than in the field. He and his tribe were particularly obnoxious to the M'Donalds and the M'Leans, two numerous septs, who, though disunited by ancient feuds, agreed in an intense dislike to the Campbells, or, as they were called, the Children of Diarmid.

For some time the assembled Chiefs remained silent, until some one should open the business of the meeting. At length one of the most powerful of them commenced the diet by saying,—"We have been summoned hither, M'Aulay, to consult of weighty matters concerning the King's affairs, and those of the state; and we crave to know by whom they are to be explained to us?"

M'Aulay, whose strength did not lie in oratory, intimated his wish that Lord Menteith should open the busi-

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ness of the council. With great modesty, and at the same time with spirit, that young lord said, " he wished what he was about to propose had come from some person of better known, and more established character Since, however, it lay with him to be spokesman, he had to state to the Chiefs assembled, that those who wished to throw off the base yoke which fanaticism had endeavoured to wreath round their necks, had not a moment to lose. The Covenanters," he said," after having twice made war upon their sovereign, and having extorted from him every request, reasonable or unreasonable, which, they thought proper to demand—after their Chiefs had been loaded with dignities and favours—after having publicly declared, when his Majesty, after a gracious visit to the land of his nativity, was upon his return to England, that he returned a contented king from a contented people,—after all this, and without even the pretext for a national grievance, the same men have, upon doubts and suspicions, equally dishonourable to the King, and groundless in themselves, detached a strong army to assist his rebels in England, in a quarrel with which Scotland had no more to do than she has with the wars in Germany. It was well," he said, " that the eagerness with which this treasonable purpose was pursued, had blinded the junto who now usurped the government of Scotland to the risk which they were about to incur. The army which they had despatched to England under old Leven, comprehended their veteran soldiers, the strength of those armies which had been levied in Scotland during the two former wars"——

Here Captain Dalgetty endeavoured to rise, for the purpose of explaining how many veteran officers, trained in the German wars, were, to his certain knowledge, in the army of the Earl of Leven. But Allan M'Aulay holding him down in the seat with one hand, pressed the forefinger of the other upon his own lips, and, though with some difficulty, prevented his interference. Captain Dalgetty looked upon him with a very scornful and indignant air,

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by which the other's gravity was in no way moved, and Lord Menteith proceeded without farther interruption.

"The moment," he said, "was most favourable for all true-hearted and loyal Scotchmen to show, that the reproach their country had lately undergone arose from the selfish ambition of a few turbulent and seditious men, joined to the absurd fanaticism which, disseminated from five hundred pulpits, had spread like a land-flood over the Lowlands of Scotland. He had letters from the Marquis of Huntly in the north, which he should show to the chiefs separately. That nobleman, equally loyal and powerful, was determined to exert his utmost energy in the common cause, and the powerful Earl of Seaforth was prepared to join the same standard. From the Earl of Airly, and the Ogilvies in Angus-shire, he had had communications equally decided; and there was no doubt that these, who, with the Hays, Leiths, Burnets, and other loyal gentlemen, would be soon on horseback, would form a body far more than sufficient to overawe the northern Covenanters, who had already experienced their valour in the well-known rout which was popularly termed the Trot of Turiff. South of Forth and Tay," he said, "the King had many friends, who oppressed by enforced oaths, compulsatory levies, heavy taxes, unjustly imposed and unequally levied, by the tyranny of the Committee of Estates, and the inquisitorial insolence of the Presbyterian divines, waited but the waving of the royal banner to take up arms. Douglas, Traquair, Roxburgh, Hume, all friendly to the royal cause, would counterbalance," he said, "the covenanting interest in the south; and two gentlemen, of name and quality, here present, from the north of England, would answer for the zeal of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Northumberland. Against so many gallant gentlemen, the southern Covenanters could but arm raw levies; the Whigamores of the western shires, and the plowmen and mechanics of the Low-country. For the West Highlands, he knew no interest which the Covenanters possessed there, except that of one individual, as well known as he was odious. But was there a single man, who, on cast-

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ing his eye round this hall, and recognizing the power, the gallantry, and the dignity of the chiefs assembled, could entertain a moment's doubt of their success against the utmost force which Gillespie Grumach could collect against them? He had only farther to add, that considerable funds, both of money and ammunition, had been provided for the army—(Here Dalgetty pricked up his ears)—that officers of ability and experience in the foreign wars, one of whom was now present, (The Captain drew himself up, and looked round,) had engaged to train such levies as might require to be disciplined; —and that a numerous body of auxiliary forces from Ireland, having been detached from the Earl of Antrim, from Ulster, had successfully accomplished their descent upon the main land, and, with the assistance of Clanranald's people, having taken and fortified the Castle of Mingarry, in spite of Argyle's attempts to intercept them, were in full march to this place of rendezvous. It only remained," he said, "that the noble Chiefs assembled, laying aside every lesser consideration, should unite, heart and hand, in the common cause; send the fiery cross through their clans, in order to collect their utmost force, and form their junction with such celerity as to leave the enemy no time, either for preparation, or recovery from the panic which would spread at the first sound of their pibroch. He himself," he said, "though neither among the richest nor the most powerful of the Scottish nobility, felt that he had to support the dignity of an ancient and honourable house, the independence of an ancient and honourable nation, and to that cause he was determined to devote both life and fortune. If those who were more powerful were equally prompt, he trusted they would deserve the thanks of their King, and the gratitude of posterity."

Loud applause followed this speech of Lord Menteith, and testified the general acquiescence of all present in the sentiments which he had expressed; but when the shout had died away, the assembled Chiefs continued to gaze upon each other as if something yet remained to be settled. After some whispers among themselves, an aged man, whom his grey hairs rendered respectable, although

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he was not of the highest order of Chiefs, replied to what had been said.

"Thane of Menteith," he said, "you have well spoken, nor is there one of us in whose bosom the same sentiments do not burn like fire. But it is not strength alone that wins the fight; it is the head of the commander, as well as the arm of the soldier, that brings victory. I ask of you who is to raise and sustain the banner under which we are invited to rise and muster ourselves? Will it be expected that we should risk our children, and the flower of our kinsmen, ere we know to whose guidance they are to be intrusted? This were leading those to slaughter, whom, by the laws of God and man, it is our duty to protect. Where is the royal commission, under which the lieges are to be convocated in arms? Simple and rude as we may be deemed, we know something of the established rules of war, as well as of the laws of our country; nor will we arm ourselves against the general peace of Scotland, unless by the express commands of the King, and under a leader fit to command such men as are here assembled."

"Where would you find such a leader," said another Chief, starting up, "saving the representative of the Lord of the Isles, entitled, by birth and hereditary descent, to lead forth the array of every clan of the Highlands; and where is that dignity lodged, save in the house of Vich Alister More?"

"I acknowledge," said another Chief, eagerly interrupting the speaker, "the truth in what has been first said, but not the inference. If Vich Alister More desires to be held representative of the Lord of the Isles, let him first show his blood is redder than mine."

"That is soon tried," said Vich Alister More, laying his hand upon the basket hilt of his claymore. Lord Menteith threw himself between them, entreating and imploring each to remember that the interests of Scotland, the liberty of their country, and the cause of their King, ought to be superior in their eyes to any personal disputes respecting descent, rank, and precedence. Several of the Highland Chiefs, who had no desire to admit the claims

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of either chieftain, interfered to the same purpose, and none with more emphasis than the celebrated Evan Dhu.

"I have come from my lakes," he said, "as a stream descends from the hills, not to turn again, but to accomplish my course. It is not by looking back to our own pretensions that we shall serve Scotland or King Charles. My voice shall be for that general whom the King shall name, who will doubtless possess those qualities, which are necessary to command men like us. High-born he must be, or we shall lose our rank in obeying him—wise and skilful, or we shall endanger the safety of our people—bravest among the brave, or we shall peril our own honour—temperate, firm, and manly, to keep us united. Such is the man that must command us. Are you prepared, Thane of Menteith, to say where such a general is to be found?"

"There is but one," said Allan M'Aulay; "and here," he said, laying his hand upon the shoulder of Anderson, who stood behind Lord Menteith, "here he stands!"

The general surprise of the meeting was expressed by an impatient murmur; when Anderson, throwing back the cloak in which his face was muffled, and stepping forward, spoke thus:—"I did not long intend to be a silent spectator of this interesting scene, although my hasty friend has obliged me to disclose myself somewhat sooner than was my intention. Whether I deserve the honour reposed in me by this parchment, will best appear from what I shall be able to do for the King's service. It is a commission, under the great seal, to James Graham, Earl of Montrose, to command those forces which are to be assembled for the service of his Majesty in this kingdom."

A loud shout of approbation burst from the assembly. There was, in fact, no other person to whom, in point of rank, these proud mountaineers would have been disposed to submit. His inveterate and hereditary hostility to the Marquis of Argyle insured his engaging in the war with sufficient energy, while his well-known military talents, and his tried valour, afforded every hope of his bringing it to a favourable conclusion.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation: an excellent plot, very good friends. *Henry IV. Part I. Act II. Sc. III.*

No sooner had the general acclamation of joyful surprise subsided, than silence was eagerly demanded for reading the royal commission; and the bonnets, which hitherto each Chief had worn, probably because unwilling to be the first to uncover, were now at once vailed in honour of the royal warrant. It was couched in the most full and ample terms, authorizing the Earl of Montrose to assemble the subjects in arms, for the putting down the present rebellion, which divers traitors and seditious persons had levied against the King, to the manifest forfaulture, as it stated, of their allegiance, and to the breach of the pacification between the two kingdoms. It enjoined all subordinate authorities to be obedient and assisting to Montrose in his enterprize; gave him the power of making ordinances and proclamations, punishing misdemeanours, pardoning criminals, placing and displacing governors and commanders. In fine, it was as large and full a commission as any with which a prince could intrust a subject. As soon as it was finished, a shout burst from the assembled Chiefs, in testimony of their ready submission to the will of their sovereign. Not contented with generally thanking them for a reception so favourable, Montrose hastened to address himself to individuals. The most important Chiefs had already been long personally known to him, but even to those of inferior consequence he now introduced himself, and by the acquaintance he displayed with their peculiar designations, and the circumstances and history of their clans, he showed how long he must have studied the character of the mountaineers, and prepared himself for such a situation as he now held.

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While he was engaged in these acts of courtesy, his graceful manner, expressive features, and dignity of deportment, made a singular contrast with the coarseness and meanness of his dress. Montrose possessed that sort of form and face, in which the beholder, at the first glance, sees nothing extraordinary, but of which the interest becomes more impressive the longer we gaze upon them. His stature was very little above the middle size, but in person he was uncommonly well-built, and capable both of exerting great force, and enduring much fatigue. In fact, he enjoyed a constitution of iron, without which he could not have sustained the trials of his extraordinary campaigns, through all of which he subjected himself to the hardships of the meanest soldier. He was perfect in all exercises, whether peaceful or martial, and possessed, of course, that graceful ease of deportment, proper to those to whom habit has rendered all postures easy. His long brown hair, according to the custom of men of quality among the Royalists, was parted on the top of his head, and trained to hang down on each side in curled locks, one of which, descending two or three inches lower than the others, intimated Montrose's compliance with that fashion, against which it pleased Mr. Prynne, the puritan, to write a treatise, entitled, " The Unloveliness of Love-locks."

The features which these tresses inclosed, were of that kind which derive their interest from the character of the man, rather than from the regularity of their form. But a high nose, a full, decided, well-opened, quick grey eye, and a sanguine complexion, made amends for some coarseness and irregularity in the subordinate parts of the face; so that, altogether, Montrose might be termed rather a handsome, than a hard-featured man. But those who saw him when his soul looked through those eyes with all the energy and fire of genius—those who heard him speak with the authority of talent, and the eloquence of nature, were impressed with an opinion even of his external form, more enthusiastically favourable than the portraits which still survive would entitle us to ascribe to it. Such, at

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least, was the impression he made upon the assembled Chiefs of the mountaineers, over whom, as upon all persons in their state of society, personal appearance has no small influence.

In the discussions which followed his discovering himself, Montrose explained the various risks which he had run in his present undertaking. His first attempt had been, to assemble a body of loyalists in the north of England, who, in obedience to the orders of the Marquis of Newcastle, he expected would have marched into Scotland; but the disinclination of the English to cross the Border, and the delay of the Earl of Antrim, who was to have landed in the Solway Frith with his Irish army, prevented his executing this design. Other plans having in like manner failed, he stated that he found himself under the necessity of assuming a disguise to render his passage secure through the Lowlands, in which he had been kindly assisted by his kinsman of Menteith. By what means Allan M'Aulay had come to know him, he could not pretend to explain. Those who knew Allan's prophetic pretensions, smiled mysteriously; but he himself only replied, that "the Earl of Montrose need not be surprised if he was known to thousands, of whom he himself could retain no memory."

"By the honour of a cavalier," said Captain Dalgetty, finding at length an opportunity to thrust in his word, "I am proud and happy in having an opportunity of drawing a sword under your lordship's command; and I do forgive all grudge, malecontent, and malice of my heart, to Mr. Allan M'Aulay, for having thrust me down to the lowest seat of the board yestreen. Certes, he hath this day spoken so like a man having full command of his senses, that I had resolved in my secret purpose that he was no way entitled to claim the privilege of insanity. But since I was only postponed to a noble earl, my future commander-in-chief, I do, before you all, recognize the justice of the preference and heartily salute Allan as one who is to be his *boncamarado*."

Having made this speech, which was little understood or attended to, without putting off his military glove, he

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seized on Allan's hand, and began to shake it with violence, which Allan, with a gripe like a smith's vice, returned with such force, as to drive the iron splents of the gauntlet into the hand of the wearer.

Captain Dalgetty might have construed this into a new affront, had not his attention, as he stood blowing and shaking the injured member, been suddenly called by Montrose himself.

"Hear this news," he said, "Captain Dalgetty—I should say, Major Dalgetty,—the Irish, who are to profit by your military experience, are now within a few leagues of us."

"Our deer-stalkers," said Angus M'Aulay, "who were abroad to bring in venison for this honourable party, have heard of a band of strangers, speaking neither Saxon nor pure Gaelic, and with difficulty making themselves understood by the people of the country, who are marching this way in arms, under the leading, it is said, of Alaster M'Donald, who is commonly called Young Colkitto."

"These must be our men," said Montrose; "we must hasten to send messengers forward, both to act as guides, and to relieve their wants."

"The last," said Angus M'Aulay, "will be no easy matter; for I am informed, that, excepting muskets and a very little ammunition, they want every thing that soldiers should have; and they are particularly deficient in money, in shoes, and in raiment."

"There is at least no use in saying so," said Montrose, "in so loud a tone. The puritan weavers of Glasgow shall provide them plenty of broad-cloth when we make a descent from the Highlands; and if the ministers could formerly preach the old women of the Scottish boroughs out of their webs of napery, to make tents to the fellows on Dunse Law,[7] I will try whether I have not a little interest both to make these godly dames renew their patriotic gift, and the prick-eared knaves, their husbands, open their purses."

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"And, respecting arms," said Captain Dalgetty, "if your lordship will permit an old cavalier to speak his mind, so that the one-third have muskets, my darling weapon would be the pike for the remainder, whether for resisting a charge of horse, or for breaking the infantry. A common smith will make a hundred pike-heads in a day; here is plenty of wood for shafts; and I will uphold, that, according to the best usages of war, a strong battalion of pikes, drawn up in the fashion of the Lion of the North, the immortal Gustavus, would beat the Macedonian phalanx, of which I used to read in the Mareschal-College, when I studied in the ancient town of Bon-accord; and further, I will venture to predicate—"

The Captain's lecture upon tactics was here suddenly interrupted by Allan M'Aulay, who said hastily,—"Room for an unexpected and unwelcome guest!"

At the same moment, the door of the hall opened, and a grey-haired man, of a very stately appearance, presented himself to the assembly. There was much dignity, and even authority, in his manner. His stature was above the common size, and his looks such as were used to command. He cast a severe, and almost stern glance upon the assembly of Chiefs. Those of the higher rank among them returned it with scornful indifference; but some of the western gentlemen, of inferior power, looked as if they wished themselves elsewhere. "To which of this assembly," said the stranger, "am I to address myself as leader? or have you not fixed upon the person who is to hold an office at least as perilous as it is honourable?"

"Address yourself to me, Sir Duncan Campbell," said Montrose, stepping forward.

"To you!" said Sir Duncan Campbell, with some scorn.

"Yes,—to me," repeated Montrose,—"to the Earl of Montrose, if you have forgot him."

"I should now, at least," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "have had some difficulty in recognizing him in the disguise of a groom.—And yet I might have guessed that no evil influence inferior to your lordship's, distinguished as

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one who troubles Israel, could have collected together this rash assembly of misguided persons."

"I will answer unto you," said Montrose, "in the manner of your own Puritans. I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house. But let us leave an altercation, which is of little consequence but to ourselves, and hear the tidings you have brought from your chief of Argyle; for I must conclude that it is in his name that you have come to this meeting."

"It is in the name of the Marquis of Argyle," said Sir Duncan Campbell,—"in the name of the Scottish Convention of Estates, that I demand to know the meaning of this singular convocation. If it is designed to disturb the peace of the country, it were but acting like neighbours, and men of honour, to give us some intimation to stand upon our guard."

"It is a singular, and new state of affairs in Scotland," said Montrose, turning from Sir Duncan Campbell to the assembly, "when Scottish men of rank and family cannot meet in the house of a common friend, without an inquisitorial visit and demand, on the part of our rulers, to know the subject of our conference. Methinks our ancestors were accustomed to hold Highland huntings, or other purposes of meeting, without asking the leave either of the great MacCallum More himself, or any of his emissaries or dependants."

"The times have been such in Scotland," answered one of the Western Chiefs, "and such they will again be, when the intruders on our ancient possessions are again reduced to be lairds of Lochow, instead of overspreading us like a band of devouring locusts."

"Am I to understand, then," said Sir Duncan, "that it is against *my* name alone that these preparations are directed? or are the race of Diarmid only to be sufferers in common with the whole of the peaceful and orderly inhabitants of Scotland?"

"I would ask," said a wild-looking Chief, starting hastily up, "one question of the Knight of Ardenvohr, ere he proceeds farther in his daring catechism.—Has he

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brought more than one life to this castle, that he ventures to intrude among us for the purposes of insult ?"

" Gentlemen," said Montrose, " let me implore your patience ; a messenger who comes among us for the purpose of embassy, is entitled to freedom of speech, and a safe-conduct. And since Sir Duncan Campbell is so pressing, I care not if I inform him, for his guidance, that he is in an assembly of the King's loyal subjects, convoked by me, in his Majesty's name and authority, and as empowered by his Majesty's royal commission."

" We are to have, then, I presume," said Sir Duncan Campbell, " a civil war in all its forms ? I have been too long a soldier to view its approach with anxiety ; but it would have been for my Lord of Montrose's honour, if, in this matter, he had consulted his own ambition less, and the peace of the country more."

" Those consulted their own ambition and self-interest, Sir Duncan," answered Montrose, " who brought the country to the pass in which it now stands, and rendered necessary the sharp remedies which we are now reluctantly about to use."

" And what rank among these self-seekers," said Sir Duncan Campbell, " shall we assign to a noble Earl, so violently attached to the Covenant, that he was the first, in 1639, to cross the Tyne, wading middle deep at the head of his regiment, to charge the royal forces ? It was the same, I think, who imposed the Covenant upon the burgesses and Colleges of Aberdeen, at the point of sword and pike."

" I understand your sneer, Sir Duncan," said Montrose, temperately ; " and I can only add, that if sincere repentance can make amends for youthful error, and for yielding to the artful representation of ambitious hypocrites, I shall be pardoned for the crimes with which you taunt me. I will at least endeavour to deserve forgiveness, for I am here, with my sword in my hand, willing to spend the best blood of my body to make amends for my error ; and mortal man can do no more."

" Well, my lord," said Sir Duncan, " I shall be sorry to carry back this language to the Marquis of Argyle. I

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had it in farther charge from the Marquis, that, to prevent the bloody feuds which must necessarily follow a Highland war, his lordship will be contented if terms of truce could be arranged to the north of the Highland line, as there is ground enough in Scotland to fight upon, without neighbours destroying each other's families and inheritances."

"It is a peaceful proposal," said Montrose, smiling, "such as it should be, coming from one whose personal actions have always been more peaceful than his measures. Yet, if the terms of such a truce could be equally fixed, and if we can obtain security,—for that, Sir Duncan, is indispensable,—that your Marquis will observe these terms with strict fidelity, I, for my part, should be content to leave peace behind us, since we must needs carry war before us. But, Sir Duncan, you are too old and experienced a soldier for us to permit you to remain in our leaguer, and witness our proceedings; we shall therefore, when you have refreshed yourself, recommend your speedy return to Inverary, and we shall send with you a gentleman on our part, to adjust the terms of the Highland armistice, in case the Marquis shall be found serious in proposing such a measure." Sir Duncan Campbell assented by a bow.

"My Lord of Menteith," continued Montrose, "will you have the goodness to attend Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, while we determine who shall return with him to his Chief? M'Aulay will permit us to request that he be entertained with suitable hospitality."

"I will give orders for that," said Allan M'Aulay, rising and coming forward. "I love Sir Duncan Campbell; we have been joint sufferers in former days, and I do not forget it now."

"My Lord of Menteith," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "I am grieved to see you, at your early age, engaged in such desperate and rebellious courses."

"I am young," answered Menteith, "yet old enough to distinguish between right and wrong, between loyalty

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and rebellion; and the sooner a good course is begun, the longer and the better have I a chance of running it."

"And you too, my friend Allan M'Aulay," said Sir Duncan, taking his hand, "must we also call each other enemies, that have been so often allied against a common foe?" Then turning round to the meeting, he said, "Farewell, gentlemen; there are so many of you to whom I wish well, that your rejection of all terms of mediation gives me deep affliction. May Heaven," he said, looking upwards, "judge between our motives, and those of the movers of this civil commotion!"

"Amen," said Montrose; "to that tribunal we all submit us."

Sir Duncan Campbell left the hall, accompanied by Allan M'Aulay and Lord Menteith. "There goes a true-bred Campbell," said Montrose, as the envoy departed, "for they are ever fair and false."

"Pardon me, my lord," said Evan Dhu; "hereditary enemy as I am to their name, I have ever found the Knight of Ardenvohr brave in war, honest in peace, and true in council."

"Of his own disposition," said Montrose, "such he is undoubtedly; but he now acts as the organ or mouth-piece of his chief, the Marquis, the falsest man that ever drew breath. And, M'Aulay," he continued in a whisper to his host, "lest he should make some impression upon the inexperience of Menteith, or the singular disposition of your brother, you had better send music into their chamber, to prevent his inveigling them into any private conference."

"The devil a musician have I," answered M'Aulay, "excepting the piper, who has nearly broke his wind by an ambitious contention for superiority with three of his own craft; but I can send Annot Lyle and her harp." And he left the apartment to give orders accordingly.

Meanwhile a warm discussion took place, who should undertake the perilous task of returning with Sir Duncan to Inverary. To the higher dignitaries, accustomed to consider themselves upon an equality even with MacCal-

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lum More, this was an office not to be proposed; unto others who could not plead the same excuse, it was altogether unacceptable. One would have thought Inverary had been the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the inferior chiefs showed such reluctance to approach it. After a considerable hesitation, the plain reason was at length spoken out, namely, that whatever Highlander should undertake an office so distasteful to MacCallum More, he would be sure to treasure the offence in his remembrance, and one day or other to make him bitterly repent of it.

In this dilemma, Montrose, who considered the proposed armistice as a mere stratagem on the part of Argyle, although he had not ventured bluntly to reject it in presence of those whom it concerned so nearly, resolved to impose the danger and dignity upon Captain Dalgetty, who had neither clan nor estate in the Highlands upon which the wrath of Argyle could wreak itself.

"But I have a neck though," said Dalgetty, bluntly; "and what if he chooses to avenge himself upon that? I have known a case where an honourable ambassador has been hanged as a spy before now. Neither did the Romans use ambassadors much more mercifully at the siege of Capua, although I read that they only cut off their hands and noses, put out their eyes, and suffered them to depart in peace."

"By my honour, Captain Dalgetty," said Montrose, "should the Marquis, contrary to the rules of war, dare to practise any atrocity against you, you may depend upon my taking such signal vengeance that all Scotland shall ring of it."

"That will do but little for Dalgetty," returned the Captain; "but corragio! as the Spaniard says. With the Land of Promise full in view, the Moor of Drumthwacket, *mea paupera regna*, as we said at Mareschal College, I will not refuse your Excellency's commission, being conscious it becomes a cavalier of honour to obey his commander's orders, in defiance both of gibbet and sword."

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"Gallantly resolved," said Montrose; "and if you will come apart with me, I will furnish you with the conditions to be laid before MacCallum More, upon which we are willing to grant him a truce for his Highland dominions."

With these we need not trouble our readers. They were of an evasive nature, calculated to meet a proposal which Montrose considered to have been made only for the purpose of gaining time. When he had put Captain Dalgetty in complete possession of his instructions, and when that worthy, making his military obeisance, was near the door of his apartment, Montrose made him a sign to return.

"I presume," said he, "I need not remind an officer who has served under the great Gustavus, that a little more is required of a person sent with a flag of truce, than mere discharge of his instructions, and that his general will expect from him on his return some account of the state of the enemy's affairs, as far as they come under his observation. In short, Captain Dalgetty, you must be *un peu clair-voyant*."

"Ah ha! your Excellency," said the Captain, twisting his hard features into an inimitable expression of cunning and intelligence, "if they do not put my head in a poke, which I have known practised upon honourable soldados who have been suspected to come upon such errands as the present, your Excellency may rely on a preceese narration of whatever Dugald Dalgetty shall hear or see, were it even how many turns of tune there are in MacCallum More's pibroch, or how many checks in the set of his plaid and trews."

"Enough," answered Montrose; "farewell, Captain Dalgetty; and as they say that a lady's mind is always expressed in her postscript, so I would have you think that the most important part of your commission lies in what I have last said to you."

Dalgetty once more grinned intelligence, and withdrew to victual his charger and himself, for the fatigues of his approaching mission.

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At the door of the stable—for Gustavus always claimed his first care—he met Angus M'Aulay and Sir Miles Musgrave, who had been looking at his horse; and, after praising his points and carriage, both united in strongly dissuading the Captain from taking an animal of such value with him upon his present very fatiguing journey.

Angus painted in the most alarming colours the roads, or rather wild tracts, by which it would be necessary for him to travel into Argyleshire, and the wretched huts or bothies where he would be condemned to pass the night, and where no forage could be procured for his horse, unless he could eat the stumps of old heather. In short, he pronounced it absolutely impossible, that, after undertaking such a pilgrimage, the animal could be in any case for military service. The Englishman strongly confirmed all that Angus had said, and gave himself, body and soul, to the devil, if he thought it was not an act little short of absolute murder, to carry a horse worth a farthing into such a waste and inhospitable desert. Captain Dalgetty for an instant looked steadily, first at one of the gentlemen and next at the other, and then asked them, as if in a state of indecision, what they would advise him to do with Gustavus under such circumstances.

"By the hand of my father, my dear friend," answered M'Aulay, "if you leave the beast in my keeping, you may rely on his being fed and sorted according to his worth and quality, and that, upon your happy return, you will find him as sleek as an onion boiled in butter."

"Or," said Sir Miles Musgrave, "if this worthy cavalier chooses to part with his charger for a reasonable sum, I have some part of the silver candlesticks still dancing the heys in my purse, which I shall be very willing to transfer to his."

"In brief, mine honourable friends," said Captain Dalgetty, again eyeing them both with an air of comic penetration, "I find it would not be altogether unacceptable to either of you to have some token to remember the old soldier by, in case it shall please MacCallum More to hang him up at the gate of his own castle. And

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doubtless it would be no small satisfaction to me, in such an event, that a noble and loyal cavalier like Sir Miles Musgrave, or a worthy and hospitable chieftain like our excellent landlord should act as my executor."

Both hastened to protest that they had no such object, and insisted again upon the impassable character of the Highland paths. Angus M'Aulay mumbled over a number of hard Gaelic names, descriptive of the difficult passes, precipices, corries, and beals, through which he said the road lay to Inverary, when old Donald, who had now entered, sanctioned his master's account of these difficulties, by holding up his hands, and elevating his eyes, and shaking his head, at every guttural which M'Aulay pronounced. But all this did not move the inflexible Captain.

"My worthy friends," said he, Gustavus is not new to the dangers of travelling, and the mountains of Bohemia; and (no disparagement to the beals and corries Mr. Angus is pleased to mention, and of which Sir Miles who never saw them, confirms the horrors,) these mountains may compete with the vilest roads in Europe. In fact, my horse hath a most excellent and social quality, for although he cannot pledge in my cup, yet we share our loaf between us, and it will be hard if he suffers famine where cakes or bannocks are to be found. And, to cut this matter short, I beseech you, my good friends, to observe the state of Sir Duncan Campbell's palfrey, which stands in that stall before us, fat and fair; and, in return for your anxiety on my account, I give you my honest asseveration, that, while we travel the same road, both that palfrey and his rider shall lack for food before either Gustavus or I."

Having said this, he filled a large measure with corn, and walked up with it to his charger, who, by his low whinnying neigh, his pricked ears, and his pawing, showed how close the alliance was betwixt him and his rider. Nor did he taste his corn until he had returned his master's caresses, by licking his hands and face. After this interchange of greeting, the steed began to his provender

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with an eager despatch, which showed old military habits; and the master, after looking on the animal with great complacency for about five minutes, said,—"Much good may it do your honest heart, Gustavus;—now must I go and lay in provant myself for the campaign."

He then departed, having first saluted the Englishman and Angus M'Aulay, who remained looking at each other for some time in silence, and then burst out into a fit of laughter.

"That fellow," said Sir Miles Musgrave, "is formed to go through the world."

"I shall think so too," said M'Aulay, "if he can slip through MacCallum More's fingers as easily as he has done through ours."

"Do you think," said the Englishman, "that the Marquis will not respect, in Captain Dalgetty's person, the laws of civilized war?"

"No more than I would respect a Lowland proclamation," said Angus M'Aulay.—"But come along, it is time I were returning to my guests."

CHAPTER IX.

> ———In a rebellion,
> When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
> Then were they chosen; in a better hour,
> Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
> And throw their power i' the dust.
>
> *Coriolanus.*

In a small apartment, remote from the rest of the guests assembled at the castle, Sir Duncan Campbell was presented with every species of refreshment, and respectfully attended by Lord Menteith, and by Allan M'Aulay. His discourse with the latter turned upon a sort of hunting campaign, in which they had been engag-

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ed together against the Children of the Mist, with whom the Knight of Ardenvohr, as well as the M'Aulays, had a deadly and irreconcilable feud. Sir Duncan, however, speedily endeavoured to lead back the conversation to the subject of his present errand to the castle of Darnlinvarach.

"It grieved him to the very heart," he said, "to see that friends and neighbours, who should stand shoulder to shoulder, were likely to be engaged hand to hand in a cause which so little concerned them. "What signifies it," he said, "to the Highland Chiefs, whether King or Parliament got uppermost? Were it not better to let them settle their own differences without interference, while the Chiefs, in the meantime, took the opportunity of establishing their own authority in a manner not to be called in question hereafter by either King or Parliament? He reminded Allan M'Aulay that the measures taken in the last reign to settle the peace, as was alleged, of the Highlands, were in fact levelled at the patriarchal power of the Chieftains; and he mentioned the celebrated settlement of the Fife undertakers, as they were called, in the Lewis, as part of a deliberate plan, formed to introduce strangers among the Celtic tribes, to destroy by degrees their ancient customs and mode of government, and to despoil them of the inheritance of their fathers.9 And yet," he continued, addressing Allan, "it is for the purpose of giving despotic authority to the monarch by whom these designs have been nursed, that so many Highland Chiefs are upon the point of quarrelling with, and drawing the sword against their neighbours, allies, and ancient confederates."

"It is to my brother," said Allan, "it is to the eldest son of my father's house, that the Knight of Ardenvohr must address these remonstrances. I am, indeed, the brother of Angus; but in being so, I am only the first of his clansmen, and bound to show an example to the others by my cheerful and ready obedience to his commands."

"The cause also," said Lord Menteith, interposing, 'is far more general than Sir Duncan Campbell seems

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to suppose it. It is neither limited to Saxon nor to Gael, to mountain nor to strath, to Highlands nor to Lowlands. The question is, if we will continue to be governed by the unlimited authority assumed by a set of persons in no respect superior to ourselves, instead of returning to the natural government of the Prince against whom they have rebelled. And respecting the interest of the Highlands in particular," he added, "I crave Sir Duncan Campbell's pardon for my plainness; but it seems very clear to me, that the only effect produced by the present usurpation, will be the aggrandizement of one overgrown clan, at the expense of every independent Chief in the Highlands."

"I will not reply to you, my lord," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "because I know your prejudices, and from whom they are borrowed; yet you will pardon my saying, that being at the head of a rival branch of the House of Graham, I have both read of and known an Earl of Menteith who would have disdained to have been tutored in politics, or to have been commanded in war, by an Earl of Montrose."

"You will find it in vain, Sir Duncan," said Lord Menteith, haughtily, "to set my vanity in arms against my principles. The King gave my ancestors their title and rank; and these shall never prevent my acting, in the royal cause, under any one who is better qualified than myself to be a commander-in-chief. Least of all, shall any miserable jealousy prevent me from placing my hand and sword under the guidance of the bravest, the most loyal, the most heroic spirit among our Scottish nobility."

"Pity," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "that you cannot add to his panegyric the farther epithets of the most steady, and the most consistent. But I have no purpose of debating these points with you, my lord," waving his hand, as if to avoid farther discussion; "the die is cast with you; allow me only to express my sorrow for the disastrous fate to which Angus M'Aulay's natural rashness,

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and your lordship's influence, are dragging my gallant friend Allan here, with his father's clan, and many a brave man besides."

"The die is cast for us all, Sir Duncan," replied Allan, looking gloomy, and arguing on his own hypochondriac feelings; "the iron hand of destiny branded our fate upon our forehead long ere we could form a wish, or raise a finger in our own behalf. Were this otherwise, by what means does the Seer ascertain the future from those shadowy presages which haunt his waking and his sleeping eye? Nought can be foreseen but that which is certain to happen."

Sir Duncan Campbell was about to reply, and the darkest and most contested point of metaphysics might have been brought into discussion betwixt two Highland disputants, when the door opened, and Annot Lyle, with her clairshach in her hand, entered the apartment. The freedom of a Highland maiden was in her step and in her eye; for, bred up in the closest intimacy with the Laird of M'Aulay and his brother, with Lord Menteith, and other young men who frequented Darnlinvarach, she possessed none of that timidity which a female, educated chiefly among her own sex, would either have felt, or thought necessary to assume, on an occasion like the present.

Her dress partook of the antique, for new fashions seldom penetrated into the Highlands, nor would they easily have found their way to a castle inhabited chiefly by men, whose sole occupation was war and the chase. Yet Annot's garments were not only becoming, but even rich. Her open jacket, with a high collar, was composed of blue cloth, richly embroidered, and had silver clasps to fasten, when it pleased the wearer. Its sleeves, which were wide, came no lower than the elbow, and terminated in a golden fringe; under this upper coat, if it can be so termed, she wore an under dress of blue satin, also richly embroidered, but which was several shades lighter in colour than the upper garment. The petticoat was formed of tartan silk, in the set, or pattern, of which the colour of blue greatly predominated, so as

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to remove the tawdry effect too frequently produced in tartan, by the mixture and strong opposition of colours. An antique silver chain hung round her neck, and supported the *wrest*, or key, with which she tuned her instrument. A small ruff rose above her collar, and was secured by a brooch of some value, an old keep-sake from Lord Menteith. Her profusion of light hair almost hid her laughing eyes, while, with a smile and a blush, she mentioned that she had M'Aulay's directions to ask them if they chose music. Sir Duncan Campbell gazed with considerable surprise and interest at the lovely apparition which thus interrupted his debate with Allan M'Aulay.

"Can this," he said to him in a whisper, "a creature so beautiful and so elegant, be a domestic musician of your brother's establishment?"

"By no means," answered Allan, hastily, yet with some hesitation; "she is a—a—near relation of our family—and treated," he added, more firmly, "as an adopted daughter of our father's house."

As he spoke thus, he arose from his seat, and with that air of courtesy which every Highlander can assume when it suits him to practise it, he resigned it to Annot, and offered to her, at the same time, whatever refreshments the table afforded, with an assiduity which was probably designed to give Sir Duncan an impression of her rank and consequence. If such was Allan's purpose, however, it was unnecessary. Sir Duncan kept his eyes fixed upon Annot with an expression of much deeper interest than could have arisen from any impression that she was a person of consequence. Annot even felt embarrassed under the old knight's steady gaze; and it was not without considerable hesitation, that, tuning her instrument, and receiving an assenting look from Lord Menteith and Allan, she executed the following ballad, which our friend, Mr. Secundus M'Pherson, whose goodness we had before to acknowledge, has thus translated into the English tongue:

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The Orphan Maid.

November's hail-cloud drifts away,
November's sun-beam wan
Looks coldly on the castle grey,
When forth comes Lady Anne.

The orphan by the oak was set,
Her arms, her feet were bare,
The hail-drops had not melted yet,
Amid her raven hair.

"And, dame," she said, "by all the ties,
That child and mother know,
Aid one who never knew these joys,
Relieve an orphan's woe."

The lady said, "An orphan's state
Is hard and sad to bear;
Yet worse the widow'd mother's fate,
Who mourns both lord and heir.

"Twelve times the rolling year has sped,
Since, when from vengeance wild
Of fierce Strathallan's chief I fled,
Forth's eddies whelmed my child."

"Twelve times the year its course has born"
The wandering maid replied,
"Since fishers on St. Bridget's morn
Drew nets on Campsie side.

"St. Bridget sent no scaly spoil;—
An infant, well nigh dead,
They saved, and reared in want and toil,
To beg from you her bread."

That orphan maid the lady kissed,—
"My husband's looks you bear;
Saint Bridget and her morn be blessed!
You are his widow's heir."

They've rob'd that maid, so poor and pale,
In silk and sandals rare;

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And pearls, for drops of frozen hail,
Are glistening in her hair.*

While the song proceeded, Lord Menteith observed, with some surprise, that it appeared to produce a much deeper effect upon the mind of Sir Duncan Campbell, than he could possibly have anticipated from his age and character. He well knew that the Highlanders of that period possessed a much greater sensibility both for tale and song than was found among their Lowland neighbours; but even this, he thought, hardly accounted for the embarrassment with which the old man withdrew his eyes from the songstress, as if unwilling to suffer them to rest on an object so interesting. Still less was it to be expected, that features which expressed pride, stern common sense, and the austere habit of authority, should have been so much agitated by so trivial a circumstance.

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* The admirers of pure Celtic antiquity, notwithstanding the elegance of the above translation, may be desirous to see a literal version from the original Gaelic, which we therefore subjoin; and have only to add, that the original is deposited with Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham.

LITERAL TRANSLATION.

The hail-blast had drifted away upon the wings of the gale of autumn. The sun looked from between the clouds, pale as the wounded hero, who rears his head feebly on the heath when the roar of battle hath passed over him.

Finele, the Lady of the Castle, came forth to see her maidens pass to the herds with their leglins. (*i. e.* Milk-pails.)

There sat an orphan maiden beneath the old oak-tree of appointment. The withered leaves fell around her, and her heart was more withered than they.

The parent of the ice (poetically taken for the frost) still congealed the hail-drops in her hair; they were like the specks of white ashes on the twisted boughs of the blackened and half-consumed oak that blazes in the hall.

And the maiden said, "Give me comfort, Lady, I am an orphan child." And the Lady replied, "How can I give that which I have not? I am the widow of a slain lord,—the mother of a perished child. When I fled in my fear from the vengeance of my husband's foe, our bark was overwhelmed in the tide, and my infant perished. This was on St. Bridget's morn, near the strong Lyns of Campsie. May ill luck light upon the day!" And the maiden answered, "It was on St. Bridget's morn, and twelve harvests before this time, that the fishermen of Campsie drew in their nets neither grilse nor salmon, but an infant half dead, who hath since lived in misery, and must die, unless she is now aided." And the Lady answered, "Blessed be Saint Bridget and her morn, for these are the dark eyes and the falcon look of my slain lord; and thine shall be the inheritance of his widow." And she called for her waiting attendants, and she bade them clothe that maiden in silk and in samite; and the pearls which they wove among her black tresses, were whiter than the frozen hail-drops.

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As the Chief's brow became clouded, he drooped his large shaggy grey eyebrows until they almost concealed his eyes, on the lids of which something like a tear might be seen to glisten. He remained silent and fixed in the same posture for a minute or two, after the last note had ceased to vibrate. He then raised his head, and having looked at Annot Lyle, as if purposing to speak to her, he as suddenly changed that purpose, and was about to address Allan, when the door opened, and the Lord of the Castle made his appearance.

CHAPTER X.

Dark on their journey lour'd the gloomy day,
Wild were the hills, and doubtful grew the way;
More dark, more gloomy, and more doubtful, show'd
The mansion, which received them from the road.
The Travellers, a Romance.

Angus M'Aulay was charged with a message which he seemed to find some difficulty in communicating; for it was not till after he had framed his speech several different ways, and blundered them all, that he succeeded in letting Sir Duncan Campbell know, that the cavalier who was to accompany him was waiting in readiness, and that all was prepared for his return to Inverary. Sir Duncan Campbell rose up very indignantly; the affront which this message implied immediately driving out of his recollection the sensibility which had been awakened by the music.

"I little expected this," he said, looking indignantly at Angus M'Aulay. "I little thought that there was a chief in the West Highlands, who, at the pleasure of a Saxon, would have bid the Knight of Ardenvohr leave his castle when the sun was declining from the meridian, and ere the second cup had been filled. But farewell, sir, the

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food of a churl does not satisfy the appetite; when I next revisit Darnlinvarach, it shall be with a naked sword in one hand and a fire-brand in the other."

"And if you so come," said Angus, "I pledge myself to meet you fairly, though you brought five hundred Campbells at your back, and to afford you and them such entertainment, that you shall not again complain of the hospitality of Darnlinvarach."

"Threatened men," said Sir Duncan, "live long. Your turn for gasconading, Laird of M'Aulay, is too well known, that men of honour should regard your vaunts. To you, my lord, and to Allan, who have supplied the place of my churlish host, I leave my thanks.—And to you, pretty mistress," he said, addressing Annot Lyle, "this little token, for having opened a fountain which hath been dry for many a year." So saying, he left the apartment, and commanded his attendants to be summoned. Angus M'Aulay, equally embarrassed and incensed at the charge of inhospitality, which was the greatest possible affront to a Highlander, did not follow Sir Duncan to the court-yard, where, mounting his palfrey, which was in readiness, followed by six mounted attendants, and accompanied by the noble Captain Dalgetty, who had also awaited him, holding Gustavus ready for action, though he did not draw his girths and mount till Sir Duncan appeared, the whole cavalcade left the castle.

The journey was long and toilsome, but without any of the extreme privations which the Laird of M'Aulay had prophesied. In truth, Sir Duncan was very cautious to avoid those nearer and more secret paths, by means of which the county of Argyle was accessible from the westward; for his relation and chief, the Marquis, was used to boast, that he would not for a hundred thousand crowns any mortal should know the passes by which an armed force could penetrate into his country.

Sir Duncan Campbell, therefore, rather shunned the Highlands, and, falling into the Low-country, made for the nearest seaport in the vicinity, where he had several half-decked gallies, or birlings, as they were called, at his com-

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mand. In one of these they embarked, with Gustavus in company, who was so seasoned to adventure, that land and sea seemed as indifferent to him as to his master.

The wind being favourable, they pursued their way rapidly with sails and oars; and early the next morning it was announced to Captain Dalgetty, then in a small cabin beneath the half-deck, that the galley was under the walls of Sir Duncan Campbell's castle.

Ardenvohr, accordingly, rose high above him, when he came upon the deck of the galley. It was a gloomy square tower, of considerable size and great height, situated upon a headland projecting into the salt-water lake, or arm of the sea, which they had entered on the preceding evening. A wall, with flanking towers at each angle, surrounded the castle to landward; but towards the lake, it was built so near the brink of the precipice, as only to leave room for a battery of seven guns, designed to protect the fortress from any insult from that side, although situated too high to be of any effectual use according to the modern system of warfare.

"The eastern sun, rising behind the old tower, flung its shadow far on the lake, darkening the deck of the galley, on which Captain Dalgetty now walked, waiting with some impatience the signal to land. Sir Duncan Campbell, as he was informed by his attendants, was already within the walls of the castle; but no one encouraged the Captain's proposal of following him ashore, until, as they stated, they should receive the direct permission or order of the Knight of Ardenvohr.

In a short time afterwards the mandate arrived, while a boat, with a piper in the bow, bearing the Knight of Ardenvohr's crest in silver upon his left arm, and playing with all his might the family march, entitled "The Campbells are Coming," approached to conduct the envoy of Montrose to the castle of Ardenvohr. The distance between the galley and the beach was so short as scarce to require the assistance of the eight sturdy rowers, in bonnets, short coats, and trews, whose efforts sent the boat to the little creek in which they usually landed, before one could have

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conceived that it had left the side of the birling. Two of the boatmen, in spite of Dalgetty's resistance, horsed the Captain on the back of a third Highlander, and, wading through the surf with him, landed him high and dry upon the beach beneath the castle rock. In the face of this rock there appeared something like the entrance of a low-browed cavern, towards which the assistants were preparing to hurry our friend Dalgetty, when, shaking himself loose from them with some difficulty, he insisted upon seeing Gustavus safely landed before he proceeded one step farther. The Highlanders could not comprehend what he meant, until one who had picked up a little English, or rather Lowland Scotch, exclaimed, "Houts! its a' about her horse, ta useless baste." Farther remonstrance on the part of Captain Dalgetty was interrupted by the appearance of Sir Duncan Campbell himself, from the mouth of the cavern which we have described, for the purpose of inviting Captain Dalgetty to accept of the hospitality of Ardenvohr, pledging his honour, at the same time, that Gustavus should be treated as became the hero from whom he derived his name, not to mention the important person to whom he now belonged. Notwithstanding this satisfactory guarantee, Captain Dalgetty would still have hesitated, such was his anxiety to witness the fate of his companion Gustavus, had not two Highlanders seized him by the arms, two more pushed him on behind, while a fifth exclaimed, "Hout awa wi' the daft Sassenach! does she no hear the laird bidding her up to her ain castle wi' her special voice, and isna that very mickle honour for the like o' her?"

Thus impelled, Captain Dalgetty could only for a short space keep a reverted eye towards the galley in which he had left the partner of his military toils. In a few minutes afterwards he found himself involved in the total darkness of a staircase, which, entering from the low-browed cavern we have mentioned, winded upwards through the entrails of the living rock.

"The cursed Highland salvages!" muttered the Captain, half aloud; "what is to become of me, if Gustavus,

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the namesake of the invincible Lion of the Protestant league, should be lamed among their untenty hands."

"Have no fear of that," said the voice of Sir Duncan, who was nearer to him than he imagined; "my men are accustomed to handle horses, both in embarking and dressing them, and you will soon see Gustavus as safe as when you last dismounted from his back."

Captain Dalgetty knew the world too well to offer any farther remonstrance, whatever uneasiness he might suppress within his own bosom. A step or two higher up the stair showed light and a door, and an iron-grated wicket led him out upon a gallery cut in the open face of the rock extending a space of about six or eight yards, until he reached a second door, where the path re-entered the rock, and which was also defended by an iron portcullis. "An admirable traverse," observed the Captain; "and if commanded by a field-piece, or even a few muskets, quite sufficient to ensure the place against a storming party."

Sir Duncan Campbell made no answer at the time; but, the moment afterwards, when they had entered the second cavern, he struck with the stick which he had in his hand, first on the one side, and then on the other of the wicket, and the sullen ringing sound which replied to the blows, made Captain Dalgetty sensible that there was a gun placed on each side for the purpose of raking the gallery through which they had passed, although the embrasures, through which they might be fired on occasion, were masqued on the outside with sods and loose stones. Having ascended the second staircase, they found themselves again on an open platform and gallery, exposed to a fire both of musketry and wall-guns, if, being come with hostile intent, they had ventured farther. A third flight of steps, cut in the rock like the former, but not caverned over, led them finally into the battery at the foot of the tower. This last stair also was narrow and steep, and, not to mention the fire which might be directed on it from above, one or two resolute men, with pikes and battle-axes, could have made the pass good against hundreds;

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for the staircase would not admit two persons abreast, and was not secured by any sort of balustrade or railing from the sheer and abrupt precipice, on the foot of which the tide now rolled with a voice of thunder. So that, under the jealous precautions used to secure this ancient Celtic fortress, a person of weak nerves, and a brain liable to become dizzy, might have found it something difficult to have achieved the entrance to the castle, even supposing no resistance had been offered.

Captain Dalgetty, too old a soldier to feel such tremors, had no sooner arrived in the court-yard, than he protested to God, the defences of Sir Duncan's castle reminded him more of the notable fortress of Spandau, situated in the March of Brandenburgh, than of any place whilk it had been his fortune to defend in the course of his travels. Nevertheless, he criticised considerably the mode of placing the guns on the battery we have noticed, observing, that "where cannon were perched, like to scarts or sea-gulls, on the top of a rock, he had ever observed that they astonished more by their noise than they dismayed by the skaith or damage which they occasioned."

Sir Duncan, without replying, conducted the soldier into the tower; the defences of which were a portcullis and iron-clenched oaken door, the thickness of the wall being the space between them. He had no sooner arrived in a hall hung with tapestry, than the Captain prosecuted his military criticism. It was indeed suspended by the sight of an excellent breakfast, of which he partook with great avidity; but no sooner had he secured this meal, than he made the tour of the apartment, examining the ground around the castle very carefully from each window in the room. He then returned to his chair, and throwing himself back into it at his length, stretched out one manly leg, and tapping his jack-boot with the riding-rod which he carried in his hand, after the manner of a half-bred man who affects ease in the society of his betters, he delivered his unasked opinion as follows:—"This house of yours, now, Sir Duncan, is a very pretty defen-

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sible sort of a tenement, and yet it is hardly such as a cavaliero of honour would expect to maintain his credit by holding out for many days. For, Sir Duncan, if it pleases you to notice, your house is over-crowed, and slighted, or commanded, as we military men say, by yonder round hillock to the landward, whereon an enemy might stell such a battery of cannon as would make ye glad to beat a chamade within forty-eight hours, unless it pleased the Lord extraordinarily to show mercy."

"There is no road," replied Sir Duncan, somewhat shortly, "by which cannon can be brought against Ardenvohr. The swamps and morasses around my house would scarce carry your horse and yourself, excepting by such paths as could be rendered impassable within a few hours."

"Sir Duncan," said the Captain, "it is your pleasure to suppose so; and yet we martial men say, that where there is a sea-coast there is always a naked side, seeing that cannon and munition, where they cannot be transported by land, may be right easily brought by sea near to the place where they are to be put in action. Neither is a castle, however secure in its situation, to be accounted altogether invincible, or, as they say, impregnable; for I protest t'ye, Sir Duncan, that I have known twenty-five men, by the mere surprise and audacity of the attack, win, at point of pike, as strong a hold as this of Ardenvohr, and put to the sword, captivate, or hold to the ransom, the defenders, being ten times their own number."

Notwithstanding Sir Duncan Campbell's knowledge of the world, and his power of concealing his internal emotion, he appeared piqued and hurt at these reflections, which the Captain made with the most unconscious gravity, having merely selected the subject of conversation as one upon which he thought himself capable of shining, and, as they say, of laying down the law, without exactly recollecting that the topic might not be equally agreeable to his landlord.

"To cut this matter short," said Sir Duncan, with an expression of voice and countenance somewhat agitated, "it is unnecessary for you to tell me, Captain Dalgetty,

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that a castle may be stormed if it is not valorously defended, or surprised if it is not heedfully watched. I trust this poor house of mine will not be found in any of these predicaments, should even Captain Dalgetty himself choose to beleaguer it."

"For all that, Sir Duncan," answered the persevering commander, "I would premonish you, as a friend, to trace out a sconce upon that round hill, with a good graffe or ditch, whilk may be easily accomplished by compelling the labour of the boors in the vicinity; it being the custom of the valorous Gustavus Adolphus to fight as much by the spade and shovel, as by sword, pike, and musket. Also I would advise you to fortify the said sconce, not only by a foussie or graffe, but also by certain stackets or palisades."—(Here Sir Duncan becoming impatient, left the apartment, the Captain following him to the door, and raising his voice as he retreated, until he was fairly out of hearing.)—"The whilk stackets or palisades should be artificially framed with re-entering angles and loopholes, or crennelles, for musketry, whereof it shall arise that the foemen——the Highland brute! the old Highland brute! They are as proud as peacocks, and as obstinate as tups—and here he has missed an opportunity of making his house as pretty an irregular fortification as an invading army ever broke their teeth upon.—But I see," he continued, looking down from the window upon the bottom of the precipice, "they have got Gustavus safe ashore—proper fellow! I would know that toss of his head among a whole squadron. I must go to see what they are to make of him.

He had no sooner reached, however, the court to the seaward, and put himself in the act of descending the staircase, than two Highland sentinels, advancing their Lochaber axes, gave him to understand that this was a service of danger.

"Diavolo!" said the soldier, "and I have got no password. I could not speak a syllable of their salvage gibberish, an it were to save me from the provost-marshal."

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"I will be your surety, Captain Dalgetty," said Sir Duncan, who had again approached him without his observing from whence; "and we will go together, and see how your favourite charger is accommodated."

He conducted him accordingly down the staircase to the beach, and from thence by a short turn behind a large rock, which concealed the stables and other offices belonging to the castle. Captain Dalgetty became sensible, at the same time, that the side of the castle to the land was rendered totally inaccessible by a ravine, partly natural and partly scarped with great care and labour, so as to be only passed by a drawbridge. Still, however, the Captain insisted, notwithstanding the triumphant air with which Sir Duncan pointed out his defences, that a sconce should be erected on Drumsnab, the round eminence to the east of the castle, in respect the house might be annoyed from thence by burning bullets full of fire, shot out of cannon, according to the curious invention of Stephen Bathian, King of Poland, whereby that prince utterly ruined the great Muscovite city of Moscow. This invention, Captain Dalgetty owned, he had not yet witnessed, but observed, "that it would give him particular delectation to witness the same put to the proof against Ardenvohr or any other castle of similar strength;" observing, "that so curious an experiment could not but afford the greatest delight to all admirers of the military art."

Sir Duncan Campbell diverted this conversation by carrying the soldier into his stables, and suffering him to arrange Gustavus according to his own will and pleasure. After this duty had been carefully performed, Captain Dalgetty proposed to return to the castle, observing, it was his intention to spend the time betwixt this and dinner, which he presumed, would come upon the parade about noon, in burnishing his armour, which, having sustained some injury from the sea-air, might, he was afraid, seem discreditable in the eyes of MacCallum More. Yet, while they were returning to the castle, he failed not to warn Sir Duncan Campbell against the great injury he might sustain by any sudden onfall of an enemy, whereby

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his horses, cattle, and granaries, might be cut off and consumed, to his great prejudice; wherefore, he again strongly conjured him to construct a sconce upon the round hill called Drumsnab, and offered his own friendly services in lining out the same. To this disinterested advice Sir Duncan only replied by ushering his guest to his apartment, and informing him that the tolling of the castle bell would make him aware when dinner was ready.

CHAPTER XI.

Is this thy castle, Baldwin? Melancholy
Displays her sable banner from the donjon,
Darkening the foam of the whole surge beneath.
Were I a habitant, to see this gloom
Pollute the face of nature, and to hear
The ceaseless sound of wave, and seabird's scream,
I'd wish me in the hut that poorest peasant
E'er fram'd, to give him temporary shelter.

Brown.

THE gallant Ritt-master would willingly have employed his leisure in studying the exterior of Sir Duncan's castle, and verifying his own military ideas upon the nature of its defences. But a stout sentinel, who mounted guard with a Lochaber-axe at the door of his apartment, gave him to understand, by very significant signs, that he was in a sort of honourable captivity.

"It is strange," thought the Ritt-master to himself, "how well these salvages understand the rules and practique of war. Who would have pre-supposed their acquaintance with the maxim of the great and godlike Gustavus Adolphus, that a flag of truce should be half a messenger half a spy?" And, having finished burnishing his arms, he sat down patiently to compute how much half a dollar per diem would amount to at the end of a six-months campaign; and when he had settled that problem, pro-

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ceeded to the more abstruse calculations necessary for drawing up a brigade of two thousand men on the principle of extracting the square root.

From his musings, he was roused by the joyful sound of the dinner-bell, on which, the Highlander, lately his guard, became his gentleman-usher, and marshalled him to the hall, where a table with four covers bore ample proofs of Highland hospitality. Sir Duncan entered, conducting his lady, a tall, faded, melancholy female, dressed in deep mourning. They were followed by a presbyterian clergyman, in his Geneva cloak, and wearing a black silk scull-cap, covering his short hair so closely, that it could scarce be seen at all; so that the unrestricted ears had an undue predominance in the general aspect. This ungraceful fashion was universal at the time, and partly led to the nicknames of round-heads, prick-eared curs, and so forth, which the insolence of the cavaliers liberally bestowed on their political enemies.

Sir Duncan presented his military guest to his lady, who received his technical salutation with a stiff and silent reverence, in which it could scarce be judged whether pride or melancholy had the greater share. The churchman, to whom he was next presented, eyed him with a glance of mingled dislike and curiosity. But the Captain, well accustomed to worse looks from more dangerous persons, cared very little either for those of the lady or of the divine, but bent his whole soul upon assaulting a huge piece of beef, which smoked at the nether end of the table. But the onslaught, as he would have termed it, was delayed until the conclusion of a very long grace, betwixt every section of which, Dalgetty handled his knife and fork, as he might have done his musket or pike when going upon action, and as often resigned them unwillingly when the prolix chaplain commenced another clause of his benediction. Sir Duncan listened with decency, though he was supposed rather to have joined the Covenanters out of devotion to his chief, than real respect for the cause either of liberty or of presbytery. His lady

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alone attended to the blessing, with symptoms of deep acquiescence.

The meal was performed almost in Carthusian silence; for it was none of Captain Dalgetty's habits to employ his mouth in talking, while it could be more profitably occupied. Sir Duncan was absolutely silent, and the lady and churchman only occasionally exchanged a few words, spoken low, and indistinctly.

But, when the dishes were removed, and their place supplied by liquors of various sorts, Captain Dalgetty no longer had, himself, the same weighty reasons for silence, and began to tire of that of the rest of the company. He commenced a new attack upon his landlord, upon the former ground.

"Touching that round monticle, or hill, or eminence, termed Drumsnab, I would be proud to hold some dialogue with you, Sir Duncan, on the nature of the sconce to be there constructed; and whether the angles thereof should be acute or obtuse—anent whilk I have heard the great Velt-Mareschal Bannier hold a learned argument with General Tiefenbach during a still-stand of arms."

"Captain Dalgetty," answered Sir Duncan very dryly, "it is not our Highland usage to debate military points with strangers. This castle is like to hold out against a stronger enemy than any force which the unfortunate gentlemen we left at Darnlinvarach are able to bring against it."

A deep sigh from the lady accompanied the conclusion of her husband's speech, which seemed to remind her of some painful circumstance.

"He who gave," said the clergyman, addressing her in a solemn tone, "hath taken away. May you, honourable lady, be long enabled to say, blessed be his name!"

To this exhortation, which seemed intended for her sole behoof, the lady answered by an inclination of her head, more humble than Captain Dalgetty had yet observed her make. Supposing he should now find her in a more conversible humour, he proceeded to accost her.

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"It is indubitably very natural that your ladyship should be downcast at the mention of military preparations, whilk I have observed to spread perturbation among women of all nations, and almost all conditions. Nevertheless, Penthesilea, in ancient times, and also Joan of Arc, and others were of a different kidney. And, as I have learned while I served the Spaniard, the Duke of Alva in former times had the leaguer-lasses who followed his camp marshalled into *tertias*, (whilk we call regiments,) and officered and commanded by those of their own feminine gender, and regulated by a commander-in-chief, called in German, Hureweibler, or, as we would say vernacularly, Captain of the Queans. True it is, they were persons not to be named as parallel to your ladyship, being such *quæ quæstum corporibus faciebant*, as we said of Jean Drochiels, at the Mareschal-College; the same whom the French term *curtisannes*, and we in Scottish"——

"The lady will spare you the trouble of further exposition, Captain Dalgetty," said his host, somewhat sternly; to which the clergyman added, "that such discourse better befitted a watch-tower guarded by profane soldiery than the board of an honourable person, and the presence of a lady of quality."

"Craving your pardon, Dominie, or Doctor, *aut quocunque alio nomine gaudes*, for I would have you to know I have studied polite letters," said the unabashed envoy, filling a great cup of wine, "I see no ground for your reproof, seeing I did not speak of those *turpes personæ*, as if their occupation or character was a proper subject of conversation for this lady's presence, but simply *par accidens* as illustrating the matter in hand, namely, their natural courage and audacity, much enhanced, doubtless, by the desperate circumstances of their condition."

"Captain Dalgetty," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "to break short this discourse, I must acquaint you that I have some business to despatch to-night, in order to enable me to ride with you to-morrow towards Inverary; and therefore"——

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"To ride with this person to-morrow!" exclaimed his lady; "such cannot be your purpose, Sir Duncan, unless you have forgotten that the morrow is a sad anniversary, and dedicated to as sad a solemnity."

"I had not forgotten," answered Sir Duncan; "how is it possible I can ever forget? but the necessity of the times requires I should send this officer onward to Inverary, without loss of time."

"Yet, surely, not that you should accompany him in person?" inquired the lady.

"It were better I did," said Sir Duncan; "yet I can write to the Marquis, and follow on the subsequent day.—Captain Dalgetty, I will despatch a letter for you, explaining to the Marquis of Argyle your character and commission, with which you will please to prepare to travel to Inverary, early to-morrow morning."

"Sir Duncan Campbell," said Dalgetty, "I am doubtless at your discretionary disposal in this matter; not the less, I pray you to remember the blot which will fall upon your own escutcheon, if you do in any way suffer me, being a commissionate flag of truce, to be circumvented in this matter, whether *clam, vi, vel precario*; I do not say by your assent to any wrong done to me, but even through absence of any due care on your part to prevent the same."

"You are under the safeguard of my honour, sir," answered Sir Duncan Campbell, "and that is more than a sufficient security. And now," continued he, rising, "I must set the example of retiring."

Dalgetty saw himself under the necessity of following the hint, though the hour was early; but, like a skilful general, he availed himself of every instant of delay which circumstances permitted. "Trusting to your honourable parole," said he, filling his cup, "I drink to you, Sir Duncan, and to the continuance of your honourable house." A sigh from Sir Duncan was the only reply.—"Also, madam," said the soldier, replenishing the quaigh with all possible despatch, "I drink to your honourable health, and fulfilment of all your virtuous desires—and, reverend

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sir, (not forgetting to fit the action to the words,) I fill this cup to the drowning of all unkindness betwixt you and Captain Dalgetty—I should say Major—and, in respect the flagon contains but one cup more, I drink to the health of all honourable cavaliers and brave soldados—and, the flask being empty, I am ready, Sir Duncan, to attend your functionary or sentinel to my place of private repose."

He received a formal permission to retire, and an assurance, that, as the wine seemed to be to his taste, another measure of the same vintage should attend him presently, in order to sooth the hours of his solitude.

No sooner had the Captain reached the apartment, than this promise was fulfilled; and, in a short time afterwards, the added comforts of a pasty of red-deer venison rendered him very tolerant both of confinement and want of society. The same domestic, a sort of chamberlain, who placed this good cheer in his apartment, delivered to Dalgetty a packet, sealed and tied up with a silken thread, according to the custom of the time, addressed with many forms of respect to the High and Mighty Prince, Archibald, Marquis of Argyle, Lord of Lorn, and so forth. The chamberlain at the same time apprized the Ritt-master, that he must take horse at an early hour for Inverary, where the packet of Sir Duncan would be at once his introduction and his passport. Not forgetting that it was his object to collect information as well as to act as an envoy, and desirous, for his own sake, to ascertain Sir Duncan's reasons for sending him onward without his personal attendance, the Ritt-master inquired the domestic, with all the precaution that his experience suggested, what were the reasons which detained Sir Duncan at home on the succeeding day. The man, who was from the Lowlands, replied, "that it was the habit of Sir Duncan and his lady to observe as a day of solemn fast and humiliation the anniversary on which their castle had been taken by surprise, and their children, to the number of four, destroyed cruelly by a band of Highland freebooters during Sir Duncan's absence upon an expedition

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which the Marquis of Argyle had undertaken against the Macleans of the Isle of Mull."

"Truly," said the soldier, "your lord and lady have some cause for fast and humiliation. Nevertheless, I will venture to pronounce, that, if he had taken the advice of any experienced soldier, having skill in the practiques of defending places of advantage, he would have built a sconce upon the small hill which is to the left of the drawbrigg. And this I can easily prove to you, mine honest friend; for, holding that pasty to be the castle—what's your name, friend?"

"Lorimer, sir," replied the man.

"Here is to your health, honest Lorimer.—I say, Lorimer—holding that pasty to be the main body or citadel of the place to be defended, and taking the marrow-bone for the sconce to be erected——"

"I am sorry, sir," said Lorimer, interrupting him, "that I cannot stay to hear the rest of your demonstration; but the bell will presently ring. As worthy Mr. Graneangowl, the Marquis's own chaplain, does family worship, and only seven of our household out of sixty persons understand the Scottish tongue, it would misbecome any one of them to be absent, and greatly prejudice me in the opinion of my lady. There are pipes and tobacco, sir, if you please to drink a whiff of smoke, and if you want anything else, it shall be forthcoming two hours hence, when prayers are over." So saying, he left the apartment.

No sooner was he gone, than the heavy toll of the castle-bell summoned its inhabitants together; and was answered by the shrill clamour of the females, mixed with the deeper tones of the men, as, talking Earse at the top of their throats, they hurried from different quarters by a long but narrow gallery, which served as a communication to many rooms, and among others, to that in which Captain Dalgetty was stationed. "There they go as if they were beating to the roll-call," thought the soldier to himself; "if they all attend the parade, I will look out, take a mouthful of fresh air, and make mine own observations on the practicabilities of this place."

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Accordingly, when all was quiet, he opened his chamber-door, and prepared to leave it, when he saw his friend with the axe advancing towards him from the distant end of the gallery, half whistling, half humming, a Gaelic tune. To have shown any want of confidence, would have been at once impolitic, and unbecoming his military character; so the Captain, putting the best face upon his situation he could, whistled a Swedish retreat, in a tone still louder than the notes of his sentinel; and retreating pace by pace, with an air of indifference, as if his only purpose had been to breathe a little fresh air, he shut the door in the face of his guard, when the fellow had approached within a few paces of him.

It is very well, thought the Ritt-master to himself; he annuls my parole by putting guards upon me, for, as we used to say at Mareschal-College, *fides et fiducia sunt relativa*;[9] and if he does not trust my word, I do not see how I am bound to keep it, if any motive should occur for my desiring to depart from it. Surely the moral obligation of the parole is relaxed, in as far as physical force is substituted instead thereof.

Thus comforting himself in the metaphysical immunities which he deduced from the vigilance of his sentinel, Ritt-master Dalgetty retired to his apartment, where, amid the theoretical calculations of tactics, and the occasional more practical attacks on the flask and pasty, he consumed the evening until it was time to go to repose. He was summoned by Lorimer at break of day, who gave him to understand, that, when he had broken his fast, for which he produced ample materials, his guide and horse were in attendance for his journey to Inverary. After complying with the hospitable hint of the chamberlain, the soldier proceeded to take horse. In passing through the apartments, he observed that domestics were busily employed in hanging the great hall with black cloth, a ceremony which, he said, he had seen practised when the immortal Gustavus Adolphus lay in state in the Castle of Wolgast, and which, therefore, he opined, was a testimonial of the strictest and deepest mourning.

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When Dalgetty mounted his steed, he found himself attended, or perhaps guarded, by five or six Campbells, well armed, commanded by one, who, from the target at his shoulder, and the short cock's-feather in his bonnet, as well as from the state which he took upon himself, claimed the rank of a Dunniewassel, or clansman of superior rank; and indeed, from his dignity of deportment, could not stand in a more distant degree of relationship to Sir Duncan, than that of tenth or twelfth cousin at farthest. But it was impossible to extract positive information on this or any other subject, inasmuch as neither this commander nor any of his party spoke English. The Captain rode, and his military attendants walked; but such was their activity, and so numerous the impediments which the nature of the road presented to the equestrian mode of travelling, that far from being retarded by the slowness of their pace, his difficulty was rather in keeping up with his guides. He observed that they occasionally watched him with a sharp eye, as if they were jealous of some effort to escape; and once, as he lingered behind at crossing a brook, one of the gillies began to blow the match of his piece, giving him to understand that he would run some risk in case of an attempt to part company. Dalgetty did not augur much good from the close watch thus maintained upon his person; but there was no remedy, for an attempt to escape from his attendants in an impervious and unknown country, would have been little short of insanity. He therefore plodded patiently on through a waste and savage wilderness, treading paths which were only known to the shepherds and cattle-drivers, and passing, with much more of discomfort than satisfaction many of those sublime combinations of mountainous scenery which now draw visiters from every corner of England to feast their eyes upon Highland grandeur, and mortify their palates upon Highland fare. At length they arrived on the southern verge of that noble lake upon which Inverary is situated; and a bugle, which the Dunniewassel winded till rock and greenwood rang, served as a signal to a well-manned galley, which, starting from a creek where it lay

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concealed, received the party on board, including Gustawus; which sagacious quadruped, an experienced traveller both by water and land, walked in and out of the boat with the discretion of a Christian.

Embarked on the bosom of Loch Fine, Captain Dalgetty might have admired one of the grandest scenes which nature affords. He might have noticed the rival rivers Aray and Shiray, which pay tribute to the lake, each issuing from its own dark and wooded retreat. He might have marked, on the soft and gentle slope that ascends from the shores, the noble old gothic castle, with its varied outline, embattled walls, towers, and outer and inner courts, which, so far as the picturesque is concerned, presented an aspect much more striking than the present massive and uniform mansion. He might have admired those dark woods which for many a mile surrounded this strong and princely dwelling, and his eye might have dwelt on the picturesque peak of Duniquoich, starting abruptly from the lake, and raising its scathed brow into the mists of middle sky, while a solitary watch-tower, perched on its top like an eagle's nest, gave dignity to the scene by awakening a sense of possible danger. All these, and every other accompaniment of this noble scene, Captain Dalgetty might have marked, if he had been so minded. But to confess the truth, the gallant Captain, who had eaten nothing since day-break, was chiefly interested by the smoke which ascended from the castle chimneys, and the expectations which this seemed to warrant of his encountering an abundant stock of provant, as he was wont to call supplies of this nature.

The boat soon approached the rugged pier, which abutted into the loch from the little town of Inverary, then a rude assemblage of huts, with a very few stone mansions interspersed, stretching upwards from the banks of Loch Fine to the principal gate of the castle, before which a scene presented itself that might easily have quelled a less stout heart, and turned a more delicate stomach, than those of Ritt-master Dugald Dalgetty, titular of Drumthwacket.

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CHAPTER XII.

For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfix'd in principle and place,
In pow'r unpleased, impatient in disgrace.

Absalom and Achitophel

The village of Inverary, now a neat country town, then partook of the rudeness of the seventeenth century, in the miserable appearance of the houses, and the irregularity of the unpaved street. But a stronger and more terrible characteristic of the period appeared in the market-place, which was a space of irregular width, half way betwixt the harbour, or pier, and the frowning castle-gate, which terminated with its gloomy arch-way, portcullis, and flankers, the upper end of the vista. Midway this space was erected a rude gibbet, on which hung five dead bodies, two of which, from their dress, seemed to have been Lowlanders, and the other three corpses were muffled in their Highland plaids. Two or three women sat under the gallows, who seemed to be mourning, and singing the coronach of the deceased, in a low voice. But the spectacle was apparently of too ordinary occurrence to have much interest for the inhabitants at large, who, while they thronged to look at the military figure, the horse of an unusual size, and the burnished panoply of Captain Dalgetty, seemed to bestow no attention whatever on the piteous spectacle which their own market-place afforded.

The envoy of Montrose was not quite so indifferent; and, hearing a word or two of English escape from a Highlander of decent appearance, he immediately halted Gustavus and addressed him. "The Provost-Marshal has been busy here, my friend. May I crave of you what these delinquents have been justified for?"

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He looked towards the gibbet as he spoke; and the Gael, comprehending his meaning rather by his action than his words, immediately replied, "Three gentlemen caterans,—God sain them (crossing himself)—twa Sassenach bits o' bodies, that wadna do something that MacCallum More bade them;" and turning from Dalgetty with an air of indifference, away he walked, staying no farther question.

Dalgetty shrugged his shoulders and proceeded, for Sir Duncan Campbell's tenth or twelfth cousin had already shown some signs of impatience.

At the gate of the Castle, another terrible spectacle of feudal power awaited him. Within a stockade or palisado, which seemed lately to have been added to the defences of the gate, and which was protected by two pieces of light artillery, was a small inclosure, where stood a huge block, on which lay an axe. Both were smeared with recent blood, and a quantity of saw-dust strewed around, partly retained and partly obliterated the marks of a very late execution.

As Dalgetty looked on this new object of terror, his principal guide suddenly twitched him by the skirt of his jerkin, and having thus attracted his attention, winked and pointed with his finger to a pole fixed on the stockade, which supported a human head, being that, doubtless, of the late sufferer. There was a leer on the Highlander's face, as he pointed to this ghastly spectacle, which seemed to his fellow-traveller ominous of nothing good.

Dalgetty dismounted from his horse at the gate-way, and Gustavus was taken from him without his being permitted to attend him to the stable according to his custom.

This gave the soldier a pang which the apparatus of death had not conveyed—"Poor Gustavus!" said he to himself, "if anything but good happens to me, I had better have left him at Darnlinvarach than brought him here among these Highland salvages, who scarce know the head of a horse from his tail. But duty must part a man from his nearest and dearest—

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"When the cannons are roaring, lads, and the colours are flying,
The lads that seek honour must never fear dying;
Then, stout cavaliers, let us toil our brave trade in,
And fight for the Gospel and the bold King of Sweden."

Thus silencing his apprehensions with the but-end of a military ballad, he followed his guide into a sort of guard-room filled with armed Highlanders. It was intimated to him that he must remain here until his arrival was communicated to the Marquis. To make this communication the more intelligible, the doughty Captain gave to the Dunniewassel Sir Duncan Campbell's packet, desiring, as well as he could, by signs, that it should be delivered into the Marquis's own hand. His guide nodded, and withdrew.

The Captain was left about half an hour in this place, to endure with indifference, or return with scorn, the inquisitive, and at the same time, the inimical glances of the armed Gael, to whom his exterior and equipage were as much subject of curiosity, as his person and country seemed matter of dislike. All this he bore with military nonchalance, until, at the expiration of the above period, a person dressed in black velvet, and wearing a gold chain, like a modern magistrate of Edinburgh, but who was, in fact, steward of the household to the Marquis of Argyle, entered the apartment, and invited, with solemn gravity, the Captain to follow him to his master's presence.

The suite of apartments through which he passed were filled with attendants or visiters of various descriptions, disposed, perhaps, with some ostentation, in order to impress the envoy of Montrose with an idea of the superior power and magnificence belonging to the rival house of Argyle. One anteroom was filled with lacqueys, arrayed in brown and yellow, the colours of the family, who, ranged in double file, gazed in silence upon Captain Dalgetty as he passed betwixt their ranks. Another was occupied by Highland gentlemen and chiefs of small branches, who were amusing themselves with chess, backgammon, and other games, which they scarce intermitted to gaze with curiosity upon the stranger. A third was filled with Lowland gentlemen and officers, who seemed also in attend-

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ance; and, lastly the presence-chamber of the Marquis himself showed him attended by a levee which marked his high importance.

This apartment, the folding-doors of which were opened for the reception of Captain Dalgetty, was a long gallery, decorated with tapestry and family portraits, and having a vaulted ceiling of open wood-work, the extreme projections of the beams being richly carved and gilded. The gallery was lighted by long lanceolated Gothic casements, divided by heavy shafts, and filled with painted glass, where the sun-beams glimmered dimly through boars-heads, and galleys, and batons, and swords, armorial bearings of the powerful house of Argyle, and emblems of the high hereditary offices of Justiciary of Scotland, and Master of the Royal Household, which they long enjoyed. At the upper end of this magnificent gallery stood the Marquis himself, the centre of a splendid circle of Highland and Lowland gentlemen, all richly dressed, among whom were two or three of the clergy, called in, perhaps, to be witnesses of his lordship's zeal for the Covenant.

The Marquis himself was dressed in the fashion of the period, which Vandyke has so often painted; but his habit was sober and uniform in colour, and rather rich than gay. His dark complexion, furrowed forehead, and downcast look, gave him the appearance of one frequently engaged in the consideration of important affairs, and who has acquired, by long habit, an air of gravity and mystery, which he cannot shake off even where there is nothing to be concealed. The cast with his eyes, which had procured him in the Highlands the nickname of Gillespie Grumach (or the grim,) was less perceptible when he looked downward, which perhaps was one cause of his having adopted that habit. In person, he was tall and thin, but not without that dignity of deportment and manners which became his high rank. Something there was cold in his address, and sinister in his look, although he spoke and behaved with the usual grace of a man of such quality. He was adored by his own clan, whose advancement he had greatly studied, although he was in proportion disliked

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by the Highlanders of other septs, some of whom he had already stripped of their possessions, while others conceived themselves in danger from his future schemes, and all dreaded the height to which he was elevated.

We have already noticed, that in displaying himself amidst his counsellors, his officers of the household, and his train of vassals, allies, and dependants, the Marquis of Argyle probably wished to make an impression on the nervous system of Captain Dugald Dalgetty. But that doughty person had fought his way, in one department or another, through the greater part of the Thirty Years War in Germany, a period when a brave and successful soldier was a companion for princes. The King of Sweden, and, after his example, even the haughty Princes of the Empire, had found themselves fain frequently to compound with their dignity, and silence, when they could not satisfy, the pecuniary claims of their soldiers, by admitting them to unusual privileges and familiarity. Captain Dugald Dalgetty had it to boast, that he had sat with princes at feasts made for monarchs, and therefore was not a person to be brow-beat even by the dignity which surrounded MacCallum More. Indeed, he was naturally by no means the most modest man in the world, but, on the contrary, had so good an opinion of himself, that into whatever company he chanced to be thrown, he was always proportionally elevated in his own conceit; so that he felt as much at ease in the most exalted society, as among his own ordinary companions. In this high opinion of his own rank he was greatly fortified by his ideas of the military profession, which, in his phrase, made a valiant cavalier a camerado to an emperor.

When introduced, therefore, into the Marquis's presence-chamber, he advanced to the upper end with an air of more confidence than grace, and would have gone close up to Argyle's person before speaking, had not the latter waved his hand, as a signal to him to stop short. Captain Dalgetty did so accordingly, and having made his military congee with easy confidence, he thus accosted the Mar-

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quis: "Give you good morrow, my lord—or rather I should say, good even; *Beso a usted los manos*, as the Spaniard says."

"Who are you, sir, and what is your business?" demanded the Marquis, in a tone which was intended to interrupt the offensive familiarity of the soldier.

"That is a fair interrogative, my lord," answered Dalgetty, "which I shall forthwith answer as becomes a cavalier, and that *peremptorie*, as we used to say at Mareschal College."

"See who or what he is, Neal," said the Marquis sternly, to a gentleman who stood near him.

"I will save the honourable gentleman the labour of investigation," continued the Captain. "I am Dugald Dalgetty, of Drumthwacket, that should be, late Rittmaster in various services, and now major of I know not what or whose regiment of Irishes; and I am come with a flag of truce from a high and powerful lord, James Earl of Montrose, and other noble persons, now in arms for his Majesty. And so, God save King Charles!"

"Do you know where you are, and the danger of dallying with us, sir," again demanded the Marquis, "that you reply to me as if I were a child or a fool? The Earl of Montrose is with the English malignants; and I suspect you are one of those Irish runagates, who are come into this country to burn and slay, as they did under Sir Phelim O'Neale."

"My lord," replied Captain Dalgetty, "I am no renegade, though a Major of Irishes; for which I might refer your lordship to the invincible Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, to Bannier, to Oxenstiern, to the warlike Duke of Saxe Weimar, Tilly, Wallenstein, Piccolomini, and other great captains, both dead and living; and touching the noble Earl of Montrose, I pray your lordship to peruse these my full powers for treating with you in the name of that right honourable commander."

The Marquis looked slightingly at the signed and sealed paper which Captain Dalgetty handed to him, and, throwing it with contempt upon a table, asked those around

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him, what he deserved who came as the avowed envoy and agent of malignant traitors, in arms against the state?

"A high gallows and a short shrift," was the ready answer of one of the by-standers.

"I will crave of that honourable cavalier who hath last spoken," said Dalgetty, "to be less hasty in forming his conclusions, and also of your lordship to be cautelous in adopting the same, in respect such threats are to be held out only to base bisognos, and not to men of spirit and action, who are bound to peril themselves as freely in services of this nature, as upon sieges, battles, or onslaughts of any sort. And albeit I have not with me a trumpet, or a white flag, in respect our army is not yet equipped with its full appointments, yet the honourable cavaliers and your lordship must concede unto me, that the sanctity of an envoy who cometh on matter of truce or parle, consisteth not in the fanfare of a trumpet, whilk is but a sound, or in the flap of a white flag, whilk is but an old rag in itself, but in the confidence reposed by the party sending, and the party sent, in the honour of those to whom the message is to be carried, and their full reliance that they will respect the *jus gentium*, as weel as the law of arms, in the person of the commissionate."

"You are not come hither to lecture us upon the law of arms, sir," said the Marquis, "which neither does nor can apply to rebels and insurgents; but to suffer the penalty of your insolence and folly for bringing a traitorous message to the Lord Justice General of Scotland, whose duty calls upon him to punish such an offence with death."

"Gentlemen," said the Captain, who began much to dislike the turn which his mission seemed about to take, "I pray you to remember, that the Earl of Montrose will hold you and your possessions liable for whatever injury my person, or my horse, shall sustain by these unseemly proceedings, and that he will be justified in executing retributive vengeance on your persons and possessions."

This menace was received with a scornful laugh, while one of the Campbells replied, "It is a far cry to Lochow;" a proverbial expression of the tribe, meaning that

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their ancient hereditary domains lay beyond the reach of an invading enemy. "But, gentlemen," farther urged the unfortunate Captain, who was unwilling to be condemned, without at least the benefit of a full hearing, "although it is not for me to say how far it may be to Lochow, in respect I am a stranger to these parts, yet, what is more to the purpose, I trust you will admit that I have the guarantee of an honourable gentleman of your own name, Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, for my safety on this mission; and I pray you to observe, that in breaking the truce towards me, you will highly prejudicate his honour and fair fame."

This seemed to be new information to many of the gentlemen, for they spoke aside with each other, and the Marquis's face, notwithstanding his power of suppressing all external signs of his passions, showed impatience and vexation.

"Does Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr pledge his honour for this person's safety, my lord?" said one of the company, addressing the Marquis.

"I do not believe it," answered the Marquis; but I have not yet had time to read his letter."

"We will pray your lordship to do so," said another of the Campbells; "our name must not suffer discredit through the means of such a fellow as this."

"A dead fly," said a clergyman, "maketh the ointment of the apothecary to stink."

"Reverend sir," said Captain Dalgetty, "in respect of the use to be derived, I forgive you the unsavouriness of your comparison; and also remit to the gentleman in the red bonnet, the disparaging epithet of *fellow* which he has discourteously applied to me, who am no way to be distinguished by the same, unless in so far as I have been called fellow-soldier by the great Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and other choice commanders, both in Germany and the Low Countries. But, touching Sir Duncan Campbell's guarantee of my safety, I will gage my life upon his making my words good thereanent, when he comes hither to-morrow."

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"If Sir Duncan be soon expected, my lord," said one of the intercessors, "it would be a pity to anticipate matters with this poor man."

"Besides that," said another, "your lordship—I speak with reverence—should, at least, consult the Knight of Ardenvohr's letter, and learn the terms on which this Major Dalgetty, as he calls himself, has been sent hither by him."

They closed around the Marquis, and conversed together in a low tone, both in Gaelic and English. The patriarchal power of the Chiefs was very great, and that of the Marquis of Argyle, armed with all his grants of hereditary jurisdiction, was particularly absolute. But there interferes some check of one kind or other even in the most despotic government. That which mitigated the power of the Celtic Chiefs, was the necessity which they lay under of conciliating the kinsmen, who, under them, led out the lower orders to battle, and who formed a sort of council of the tribe in time of peace. The Marquis on this occasion, thought himself under the necessity of attending to the remonstrances of this senate, or more properly *Couroultai*, of the name of Campbell, and, slipping out of the circle, gave orders for the prisoner to be removed to a place of security.

"Prisoner!" exclaimed Dalgetty, exerting himself with such force as well nigh to shake off two Highlanders, who for some minutes past had waited the signal to seize him, and kept for that purpose close at his back. Indeed the soldier had so nearly attained his liberty, that the Marquis of Argyle changed colour, and stepped back two paces, laying, however, his hand on his sword, while several of his clan, with ready devotion, threw themselves betwixt him and the apprehended vengeance of the prisoner. But the Highland guards were too strong to be shaken off, and the unlucky Captain, after having had his offensive weapons taken from him, was dragged off, and conducted through several gloomy passages to a small side-door grated with iron, within which was another of wood. These were opened by a grim old Highlander with

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a long white beard, and displayed a very steep and narrow flight of steps leading downward. The Captain's guards pushed him down two or three steps, then, unloosing his arms, left him to grope his way to the bottom as he could; a task which became difficult and even dangerous, when the two doors being successively locked left the prisoner in total darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

Whatever stranger visits here,
We pity his sad case,
Unless to worship he draw near
The King of Kings—his Grace.
Burns's Epigram on a visit to Inverary.

The Captain, finding himself deprived of light in the manner we have described, and placed in a very uncertain situation, proceeded to descend the narrow and broken stair with all the caution in his power, hoping that he might find at the bottom some place to repose himself. But, with all his care, he could not finally avoid making a false step, which brought him down the four or five last steps too hastily to preserve his equilibrium. At the bottom he stumbled over a bundle of something soft, which stirred and uttered a groan, so deranging the Captain's descent, that he floundered forward, and finally fell upon his hands and knees on the floor of a damp and stone-paved dungeon.

When Dalgetty had recovered, his first demand was to know over whom he had stumbled.

"He was a man a month since," answered a hollow and broken voice.

"And what is he now, then," said Dalgetty, "that he thinks it fitting to lie upon the lowest step of the stairs, and

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clew'd up like a hurchin, that honourable cavaliers, who chance to be in trouble, may break their noses over him?"

"What is he now?" replied the same voice; "he is a wretched trunk, from which the boughs have one by one been lopped away, and which cares little how soon it is torn up and hewed into billets for the furnace."

"Friend," said Dalgetty, "I am sorry for you; but *patienza*, as the Spaniard says. If you had but been as quiet as a log, as you call yourself, I should have saved some excoriations on my hands and knees."

"You are a soldier," replied his fellow-prisoner; "do you complain on account of a fall for which a boy would not bemoan himself?"

"A soldier?" said the Captain; "and how do you know, in this cursed dark cavern, that I am a soldier?"

"I heard your armour clash as you fell," replied the prisoner, "and now I see it glimmer. When you have remained as long as I in this darkness, your eyes will distinguish the smallest eft that crawls on the floor."

"I had rather the devil picked them out!" said Dalgetty; "if this be the case, I shall wish for a short turn of the rope, a soldier's prayer, and a leap from a ladder. But what sort of provant have you got here—what food, I mean, brother in affliction?"

"Bread and water once a-day," replied the voice.

"Pri'thee, friend, let me taste your loaf," said Dalgetty; "I hope we shall play good comrades while we dwell together in this abominable pit."

"The loaf and jar of water," answered the other prisoner, "stand in the corner, two steps to your right hand. Take them, and welcome. With earthly food I have well nigh done."

Dalgetty did not wait for a second invitation, but, groping out the provisions, began to munch at the stale black oaten loaf with as much heartiness as we have seen him play his part at better viands.

"This bread," he said, muttering, (with his mouth full at the same time,) "is not very savoury; nevertheless, it is not much worse than that which we ate at the fa-

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mous leaguer at Werben, where the valorous Gustavus foiled all the efforts of the celebrated Tilly, that terrible old hero, who had driven two kings out of the field—namely, Ferdinand of Bohemia, and Christian of Denmark. And anent this water, which is none of the most sweet, I drink in the same to your speedy deliverance, comrade, not forgetting mine own, and devoutly wishing it were Rhenish wine, or humming Lubeck beer, at the least, were it but in honour of the pledge."

While Dalgetty ran on in this way, his teeth kept time with his tongue, and he speedily finished the provisions which the benevolence or indifference of his companion in misfortune had abandoned to his voracity. When this task was accomplished, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and seating himself in a corner of the dungeon in which he could obtain a support on each side, (for he had always been an admirer of elbow-chairs, he remarked, even from his youth upward,) he began to question his fellow-captive.

"Mine honest friend," said he, "you and I, being comrades at bed and board, should be better acquainted. I am Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, and so forth, Major in a regiment of loyal Irishes, and Envoy Extraordinary of a High and Mighty Lord, James Earl of Montrose—Pray, what may your name be?"

"It will avail you little to know," replied his more taciturn companion.

"Let me judge of that matter," answered the soldier.

"Well, then—Ranald MacEagh is my name—that is, Ranald, Son of the Mist."

"Son of the Mist!" ejaculated Dalgetty. "Son of utter darkness, say I. But, Ranald, since that is your name, how came you in possession of the provost's court of guard? what the devil brought you here, that is to say?"

"My misfortunes and my crimes," answered Ranald. Know ye the Knight of Ardenvohr?"

"I do know that honourable person," replied Dalgetty.

"But know ye where he now is?" replied Ranald.

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"Fasting this day at Ardenvohr," answered the Envoy, "that he may feast to-morrow at Inverary; in which last purpose, if he chance to fail, my lease of human service will be something precarious."

"Then let him know, one claims his intercession, who is his worst foe and his best friend," answered Ranald.

"Truly I shall desire to carry a less questionable message," answered Dalgetty. "Sir Duncan is not a person to play at reading riddles with."

"Craven Saxon," said the prisoner, "tell him I am the raven that, fifteen years since, stooped on his tower of strength and the pledges he had left there—I am the hunter that found out the wolf's den on the rock, and destroyed his offspring—I am the leader of the band which surprised Ardenvohr yesterday was fifteen years, and gave his four children to the sword."

"Truly, my honest friend," said Dalgetty, "if that is your best recommendation to Sir Duncan's favour, I would pretermit my pleading thereupon, in respect I have observed that even the animal creation are incensed against those who intromit with their offspring forcibly, much more any rational and christian creatures, who have had violence done upon their small family. But I pray you in courtesy to tell me whether you assailed the castle from the hillock called Drumsnab, whilk I uphold to be the true point of attack, unless it were to be protected by a sconce."

"We ascended the cliff by ladders of withies or saplings," said the prisoner, "drawn up by an accomplice and clansman, who had served six months in the castle to enjoy that one night of unlimited vengeance. The owl whooped around us as we hung betwixt heaven and earth; the tide roared against the foot of the rock, and dashed asunder our skiff, yet no man's heart failed him. In the morning there was blood and ashes, where there had been peace and joy at the sunset."

"It was a pretty camisade, I doubt not, Ranald MacEagh, a very sufficient onslaught, and not unworthily discharged. Nevertheless, I would have pressed the house from that

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little hillock called Drumsnab. But yours is a pretty irregular Scythian fashion of warfare, Ranald, much resembling that of Turks, Tartars, and other Asiatic people. But the reason, my friend, the cause of this war—the *teturrima causa*, as I may say? Deliver me that, Ranald."

"We had been pushed at by the M'Aulays, and other western tribes," said Ranald, "till our possessions became unsafe for us."

"Ah ha!" said Dalgetty; "I have faint remembrance of having heard of that matter. Did you not put bread and cheese into a man's mouth, when he had never a stomach whereunto to transmit the same?"

"You have heard, then," said Ranald, "the tale of our revenge on the haughty forester?"

"I bethink me that I have," said Dalgetty, "and that not of an old date. It was a merry jest that, of cramming the bread into the dead man's mouth, but somewhat too wild and salvage, for civilized acceptation, besides wasting the good victuals. I have seen when at a siege or a leaguer, Ranald, a living soldier would have been the better, Ranald, for that crust of bread, whilk you threw away on a dead pow."

"We were attacked by Sir Duncan," continued MacEagh, "and my brother was slain—his head was withering on the battlements which we scaled—I vowed revenge, and it is a vow I have never broken."

"It may be so," said Dalgetty; "and every thoroughbred soldier will confess that revenge is a sweet morsel; but in what manner this story will interest Sir Duncan in your justification, unless it should move him to intercede with the Marquis to change the manner thereof from hanging, or simple suspension, to breaking your limbs on the roue, or wheel, with the coulter of a plough, or otherwise putting you to death by torture, surpasses my comprehension. Were I you, Ranald, I would be for miskenning Sir Duncan, keeping my own secret, and departing quietly by suffocation, like your ancestors before you."

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"Yet hearken, stranger," said the Highlander. "Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr had four children. Three died under our dirks, but the fourth survives; and more would he give to dandle on his knee the fourth child which remains, than to rack these old bones, which care little for the utmost indulgence of his wrath. One word, if I list to speak it, could turn his day of humiliation and fasting into a day of thankfulness and rejoicing and breaking of bread. O! I know it by my own heart! Dearer to me is the child Kenneth, who chaseth the butterfly on the banks of the Aven, than ten sons who are mouldering in earth, or are preyed on by the fowls of the air."

"I presume, Ranald," continued Dalgetty, "that the three pretty fellows whom I saw yonder in the market-place, strung up by the head like rizzer'd haddocks, claimed some interest in you?"

There was a brief pause ere the Highlander replied, in a tone of strong emotion,—"They were my sons, stranger—they were my sons!—blood of my blood—bone of my bone!—fleet of foot—unerring in aim—unvanquished by foemen till the sons of Diarmid overcame them by numbers! Why do I wish to survive them? The old trunk will less feel the rending up of its roots, than it has felt the lopping off of its graceful boughs. But Kenneth must be trained to revenge—the young eagle must learn from the old how to stoop on his foes. I will purchase for his sake my life and my freedom, by discovering my secret to the Knight of Ardenvohr."

"You may attain your end more easily," said a third voice, mingling in the conference, "by intrusting it to me."

All Highlanders are superstitious. "The Enemy of Mankind is among us!" said Ranald MacEagh, springing to his feet. His chains clattered as he rose, while he drew himself as far as they permitted from the quarter whence the voice appeared to proceed. His fear in some degree communicated itself to Captain Dalgetty, who began to repeat, in a sort of a polyglot gibberish, all the

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exorcisms he had ever heard of, without being able to remember more than a word or two of each.

"*In nomine domini*, as we said at Mareschal-College —*santissima madre di dios*, as the Spaniard has it—*alle guten geister loben den Herrn*, saith the blessed Psalmist, in doctor Luther's translation"——

"A truce with your exorcisms," said the voice they had heard before; "though I come strangely among you, I am mortal like yourselves, and my assistance may avail you in your present strait, if you are not too proud to be counselled."

While the stranger thus spoke, he withdrew the shade of a dark lantern, by whose feeble light Dalgetty could only discern that the speaker who had thus mysteriously united himself to their company, and mixed in their conversation, was a tall man, dressed in a livery cloak of the Marquis. His first glance was to his feet, but he saw neither the cloven foot which Scottish legends assign to the foul fiend, nor the horse's hoof by which he is distinguished in Germany. His first inquiry was, how the stranger had come among them?

"For," said he, "the creak of these rusty bars would have been heard had the door been made patent; and if you passed through the key-hole, truly, sir, put what face you will on it, you are not fit to be enrolled in a regiment of living men."

"I reserve my secret," answered the stranger, "until you shall merit the discovery by communicating to me some of yours. It may be that I shall be moved to let you out where I myself came in."

"It cannot be through the key-hole then," said Captain Dalgetty, "for my corselet would stick in the passage, were it possible that my head-piece could get through. As for secrets, I have none of my own, and but few appertaining to others. But impart to us what secrets you desire to know; or, as professor Snufflegreek used to say at the Mareschal-College, Aberdeen, speak that I may know thee.'

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"It is not with you I have first to do," replied the stranger, turning his light full on the wild and wasted features, and the large limbs of the Highlander, Ranald MacEagh, who, close drawn up against the walls of the dungeon, seemed yet uncertain whether his guest was a living being.

"I have brought you something, my friend," said the stranger, in a more soothing tone, "to mend your fare; if you are to die to-morrow, it is no reason wherefore you should not live to-night."

"None at all—no reason in the creation," replied the ready Captain Dalgetty, who forthwith began to unpack the contents of a small basket which the stranger had brought under his cloak, while the Highlander, either in suspicion or disdain, paid no attention to the good cheer.

"Here's to thee, my friend," said the Captain, who having already despatched a huge piece of roasted kid, was now taking a pull at the wine-flask. "What is thy name, my good friend?"

"Murdoch Campbell, sir," answered the servant, "a lackey of the Marquis of Argyle, and occasionally acting as under-warden."

"Then here is to thee once more, Murdoch," said Dalgetty, "drinking to you by your proper name for the better luck sake. This wine I take to be Calcavella. Well, honest Murdoch, I take it on me to say, thou deservest to be upper-warden, since thou showest thyself twenty times better acquainted with the way of victualling honest gentlemen that are under misfortune, than thy principal. Bread and water? out upon him! It was enough, Murdoch, to destroy the credit of the Marquis's dungeon. But I see you would converse with my friend, Ranald MacEagh here. Never mind my presence; I'll get me into this corner with the basket, and I will warrant my jaws make noise enough to prevent my ears from hearing you."

Notwithstanding this promise, however, the veteran listened with all the attention he could to gather their

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discourse, or, as he described it himself, "laid his ears back in his neck, like Gustavus when he heard the key turn in the girnel-kist." He could, therefore, owing to the narrowness of the dungeon, easily overhear the following dialogue.

"Are you aware, Son of the Mist," said the Campbell, "that you will never leave this place excepting for the gibbet?"

"Those who are dearest to me," answered MacEagh, "have trod that path before me."

"Then you would do nothing," asked the visiter, "to shun following them?"

The prisoner writhed himself in his chains before returning an answer.

"I would do much," at length he said; "not for my own life, but for the sake of the pledge in the glen of Strath-Aven."

"And what would you do to turn away the bitterness of the hour?" again demanded Murdoch; "I care not for what cause ye mean to shun it."

"I would do what a man might do, and still call himself a man."

"Do you call yourself a man," said the interrogator, "who have done the deeds of a wolf?"

"I do," answered the outlaw; "I am a man like my forefathers—while wrapt in the mantle of peace, we were lambs—it was rent from us, and ye now call us wolves. Give us the huts ye have burned, our children whom ye have murdered, our widows whom ye have starved—collect from the gibbet and the pole the mangled carcasses and whitened skulls of our kinsmen—bid them live and bless us, and we will be your vassals and brothers—till then, let death, and blood, and mutual wrong, draw a dark veil of division between us."

"You will then do nothing for your liberty," said the Campbell.

"Anything—but call myself the friend of your tribe," answered MacEagh.

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"We scorn the friendship of banditti and Caterans," retorted Murdoch, "and would not stoop to accept it.—What I demand to know from you, in exchange for your liberty is, where the daughter and heiress of the Knight of Ardenvohr is now to be found."

"That you may wed her to some beggarly kinsman of your great master," said Ranald, "after the fashion of the Children of Diarmid! Does not the valley of Glenorquhy, to this very hour, cry shame on the violence offered to a helpless infant whom her kinsmen were conveying to the court of the Sovereign? Were not her escort compelled to hide her beneath a cauldron, round which they fought till not one remained to tell the tale?—and was not the girl brought to this fatal castle, and afterwards wedded to the brother of MacCallum More, and all for the sake of her broad lands?"[10]

"And if the tale be true," said Murdoch, "she had a preferment beyond what the King of Scots would have conferred on her. But this is far from the purpose. The daughter of Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr is of our own blood, not a stranger; and who has so good a right to know her fate as MacCallum More, the chief of her clan?"

"It is on his part, then, that you demand it?" said the outlaw. The domestic of the Marquis assented.

"And you will practise no evil against the maiden?—I have done her wrong enough already."

"No evil, upon the word of a Christian man," replied Murdoch.

"And my guerdon is to be life and liberty?" said the Child of the Mist.

"Such is our paction," replied the Campbell.

"Then know, that the child whom I saved out of compassion at the spoiling of her father's tower of strength, was bred as an adopted daughter of our tribe, until we were worsted at the pass of Ballenduthil, by the fiend incarnate and mortal enemy of our tribe, Allan M'Aulay of the Bloody-hand, and by the horsemen of Lennox, under the heir of Menteith."

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"Fell she into the power of Allan of the Bloody-hand," said Murdoch, "and she a reputed daughter of thy tribe? then her blood has gilded the dirk, and thou hast said nothing to rescue thine own forfeited life."

"If my life rest on her's," answered the outlaw, "it is secure, for she still survives; but it has a more insecure reliance—the frail promise of a son of Diarmid."

"That promise shall not fail you," said the Campbell, "if you can assure me that she survives, and where she is to be found."

"In the castle of Darnlinvarach," said Ranald Mac-Eagh, "under the name of Annot Lyle. I have often heard of her from my kinsmen, who have again approached their native woods, and it is not long since mine old eyes beheld her."

"You!" said Murdoch in astonishment, "you, a chief among the Children of the Mist, and ventured so near your mortal foe?"

"Son of Diarmid, I did more," replied the outlaw; "I was in the hall of the castle, disguised as a harper, from the wild shores of Skianach. My purpose was to have plunged my dirk in the body of the M'Aulay with the Bloody-hand, before whom our race trembles, and to have taken thereafter what fate God should send me. But I saw Annot Lyle, even when my hand was on the hilt of my dagger. She touched her clairshach[11] to a song of the Children of the Mist, which she had learned when her dwelling was amongst us. The woods in which we had dwelt pleasantly, rustled their green leaves in the song, and our streams were there with the sound of all their waters. My hand forsook the dagger; the fountains of mine eyes were opened, and the hour of revenge passed away.—And now, son of Diarmid, have I not paid the ransom of my head?"

"Ay," replied Murdoch, "if your tale be true; but what proof can you assign for it?"

"Bear witness, heaven and earth," exclaimed the outlaw, "he already looks how he may step over his word!"

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"Not so," replied Murdoch; "every promise shall be kept to you when I am assured you have told me the truth. But I must speak a few words with your companion in captivity."

"Fair and false—ever fair and false," muttered the prisoner, as he threw himself once more on the floor of his dungeon.

Meanwhile, Captain Dalgetty, who had attended to every word of this dialogue, was making his own remarks on it in private. "What the *henker* can this sly fellow have to say to me? I have no child, either of my own, so far as I know, or of any other person, to tell him a tale about. But let him come on—he will have some manœuvring ere he turn the flank of the old soldier."

Accordingly, as if he had stood pike in hand to defend a breach, he waited with caution, but without fear, the commencement of the attack. "You are a citizen of the world, Captain Dalgetty," said Murdoch Campbell, "and cannot be ignorant of our old Scotch proverb *gif-gaf*,[12] which goes through all nations and all services."

"Then I should know something of it," said Dalgetty, "for, except the Turks, there are few powers in Europe whom I have not served; and I have sometimes thought of taking a turn either with Bethlem Gabor, or with the Janizaries."

"A man of your experience and unprejudiced ideas, then, will understand me at once," said Murdoch, "when I say, I mean that your freedom shall depend on your true and upright answer to a few trifling questions respecting the gentlemen you have left; their state of preparation; the number of their men, and nature of their appointments; and as much as you chance to know about their plan of operations."

"Just to satisfy your curiosity," said Dalgetty, "and without any farther purpose?"

"None in the world," replied Murdoch; "what interest should a poor devil like me take in their operations?"

"Make your interrogations then," said the Captain, "and I will answer them *peremptorie*."

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"How many Irish may be on their march to join James Grahame the delinquent?"

"Probably ten thousand," said Captain Dalgetty.

"Ten thousand!" replied Murdoch angrily; "we know that scarce two thousand landed at Ardnamurchan."

"Then you know more about them than I do," answered Captain Dalgetty, with great composure. "I never saw them mustered yet, or even under arms."

"And how many men of the clans may be expected?" demanded Murdoch.

"As many as they can make," replied the Captain.

"You are answering from the purpose, sir," said Murdoch; "speak plainly, will there be five thousand men?"

"There and thereabouts," answered Dalgetty.

"You are playing with your life, sir, if you trifle with me," replied the catechist; "one whistle of mine, and in less than ten minutes your head hangs on the drawbridge."

"But to speak candidly, Mr. Murdoch," replied the Captain, "do you think it is a reasonable thing to ask me after the secrets of our army, and I engaged to serve for the whole campaign? If I taught you how to defeat Montrose, what becomes of my pay, arrears, and chance of booty?"

"I tell you," said Campbell, "that if you be stubborn, your campaign shall begin and end in a march to the block at the castle-gate, which stands ready for such land-laufers; but if you answer my questions faithfully, I will receive you into my—into the service of MacCallum More."

"Does the service afford good pay?" said Captain Dalgetty.

"He will double yours, if you will return to Montrose and act under his direction."

"I wish I had seen you, sir, before taking on with him," said Dalgetty, appearing to meditate.

"On the contrary, I can afford you more advantageous terms now," said the Campbell; "always supposing that you are faithful."

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"Faithful, that is, to you, and a traitor to Montrose," answered the Captain.

"Faithful to the cause of religion and good order," answered Murdoch, "which sanctifies any deception you may employ to serve it."

"And the Marquis of Argyle,—should I incline to enter his service, is he a kind master?" demanded Dalgetty.

"Never man kinder," quoth Campbell.

"And bountiful to his officers?" pursued the Captain.

"The most open hand in Scotland," replied Murdoch.

"True and faithful to his engagements?" continued Dalgetty.

"As honourable a nobleman as breathes," said the clansman.

"I never heard so much good of him before," said Dalgetty; "you must know the Marquis well,—or rather you must be the Marquis himself!—Lord of Argyle," he added, throwing himself suddenly on the disguised nobleman, "I arrest you in the name of King Charles, as a traitor. If you venture to call for assistance, I will wrench round your neck."

The attack which Dalgetty made upon Argyle's person was so sudden and unexpected, that he easily prostrated him on the floor of the dungeon, and held him down with one hand, while his right, grasping the Marquis's throat, was ready to strangle him on the slightest attempt to call for assistance.

"Lord of Argyle," he said, "it is now my turn to lay down the terms of capitulation. If you list to show me the private way by which you entered the dungeon, you shall escape, on condition of being my *locum tenens*, as we said at the Mareschal-College, until your warder visits his prisoners. But if not, I will first strangle you —I learned the art from a Polonian heyduck, who had been a slave in the Ottoman seraglio—and then seek out a mode of retreat."

"Villain! you would not murder me for my kindness," murmured Argyle.

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"Not for your kindness, my lord," replied Dalgetty; "but first, to teach your lordship the *jus gentium* towards cavaliers who come to you under safe-conduct; and secondly, to warn you of the danger of proposing dishonourable terms to any worthy soldado, in order to tempt him to become false to his standard during the term of his service."

"Spare my life," said Argyle, "and I will do as you require."

Dalgetty maintained his gripe upon the Marquis's throat, compressing it a little, while he asked questions, and relaxing it so far as to give him the power of answering them.

"Where is the secret door into the dungeon?" he demanded.

"Hold up the lantern, to the corner on your right hand, you will discern the iron which covers the spring," replied the Marquis.

"So far so good.—Where does the passage lead to?"

"To my private apartment behind the tapestry," answered the prostrate nobleman.

"From thence how shall I reach the gateway?"

"Through the grand gallery, the anteroom, the lackeys' waiting-hall, the grand guard-room"——

"All crowded with soldiers, factionaries, and attendants?—that will never do for me, my lord;—have you no secret passage to the gate, as you have to your dungeons? I have seen such in Germany."

"There is a passage through the chapel," said the Marquis, "opening from my apartment."

"And what is the pass-word at the gate?"

"The sword of Levi," replied the Marquis; "but if you will receive my pledge of honour, I will go with you, escort you through every guard, and set you at full liberty with a passport."

"I might trust you, my lord, were your throat not already black with the grasp of my fingers;—as it is, *beso los manos a usted*, as the Spaniard says. Yet you may

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grant me a passport;—are there writing materials in your apartment?"

"Surely; and blank passports ready to be signed. I will attend you there," said the Marquis, "instantly."

"It were too much honour for the like of me," said Dalgetty; "your lordship shall remain under charge of mine honest friend Ranald MacEagh; therefore, prithee let me drag you within reach of his chain.—Honest Ranald, you see how matters stand with us. I shall find the means, I doubt not, of setting you at freedom. Meantime, do as you see me do; clap your hand thus on the weasand of this high and mighty prince, under his ruff, and if he offer to struggle or cry out, fail not, my worthy Ranald, to squeeze doughtily; and if it be *ad deliquium*, Ranald, that is, till he swoon, there is no great matter, seeing he designed your gullet and mine to still harder usage."

"If he offer at speech or struggle," said Ranald, "he dies by my hand."

"That is right, Ranald—very spirited:—a thorough-going friend that understands a hint is worth a million!"

Thus resigning the charge of the Marquis to his new confederate, Dalgetty pressed the spring, by which the secret door flew open, though so well were its hinges polished and oiled, that it made not the slightest noise in revolving. The opposite side of the door was secured by very strong bolts and bars, beside which hung one or two keys, designed apparently to undo fetter-locks. A narrow staircase, ascending up through the thickness of the castle-wall, landed, as the Marquis had truly informed him, behind the tapestry of his private apartment. Such communications were frequent in old feudal castles, as they gave the lord of the fortress, like a second Dionysius the means of hearing the conversation of his prisoners, or, if he pleased, of visiting them in disguise, an experiment which had terminated so unpleasantly on the present occasion for Gillespie Grumach. Having examined previously whether there was any one in the apartment,

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and finding the coast clear, the Captain entered, and hastily possessing himself of a blank passport, several of which lay on the table, and of writing materials, securing, at the same time, the Marquis's dagger, and a silk cord from the hangings, he again descended into the cavern, where, listening a moment at the door, he could hear the half-stifled voice of the Marquis making great proffers to MacEagh, on condition he would suffer him to give an alarm.

"Not for a forest of deer—not for a thousand head of cattle," answered the freebooter; "not for all the lands that ever called a son of Diarmid master, will I break the troth I have plighted to him of the iron-garment!"

"He of the iron-garment," said Dalgetty, entering, "is bounden unto you, MacEagh, and this noble lord shall be bounden also; but first he must fill up this passport with the names of Major Dugald Dalgetty and his guide, or he is like to have a passport to another world."

The Marquis subscribed, and wrote, by the light of the dark lantern, as the soldier prescribed to him.

"And now, Ranald," said Dalgetty, "strip thy upper garment—thy plaid I mean, Ranald, and in it will I muffle the MacCallum More, and make of him, for the time, a Child of the Mist—Nay, I must bring it over your head, my lord, so as to secure us against your mistimed clamour. —So, now he is sufficiently muffled;—hold down your hands, or, by Heaven, I will stab you to the heart with your own dagger!—nay, you shall be bound with nothing less than silk, as your quality deserves.—So, now he is secure till some one comes to relieve him. If he ordered us a late dinner, Ranald, he is like to be the sufferer; —at what hour, my good Ranald, did the jailor usually appear?"

"Never till the sun was beneath the western wave," said MacEagh.

"Then, my friend, we shall have three hours good," said the cautious Captain. "In the meantime, let us labour for your liberation."

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To examine Ranald's chain was the next occupation. It was undone by means of one of the keys which hung behind the private door, probably deposited there, that the Marquis might if he pleased dismiss a prisoner, or remove him elsewhere without the necessity of summoning the warden. The outlaw stretched his benumbed arms, and bounded from the floor of the dungeon in all the ecstasy of recovered freedom.

"Take the livery-coat of that noble prisoner," said Captain Dalgetty; "put it on, and follow close at my heels."

The outlaw obeyed. They ascended the private stair, having first secured the door behind them, and thus safely reached the apartment of the Marquis.[13]

CHAPTER XIV.

> This was the entry then, these stairs—but whither after?
> Yet he that's sure to perish on the land
> May quit the nicety of card and compass,
> And trust the open sea without a pilot.
>
> *Tragedy of Brennovalt.*

"Look out for the private way through the chapel, Ranald," said the Captain, "while I give a hasty regard to these matters."

Thus speaking, he seized with one hand a bundle of Argyle's most private papers, and with the other a purse of gold, both of which lay in a drawer of a rich cabinet which stood invitingly open. Neither did he neglect to possess himself of a sword and pistols, with powder-flask and balls, which hung in the apartment. "Intelligence and booty," said the veteran, as he pouched the spoils, "each honourable cavalier should look to, the one on his general's behalf, and the other on his own.

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This sword is an Andrew Ferrara, and the pistols better than mine own. But a fair exchange is no robbery. Soldados are not to be endangered, and endangered gratuitously, my Lord of Argyle.—But soft, soft, Ranald; wise Man of the Mist, whither art thou bound?"

It was indeed full time to stop MacEagh's proceedings; for, not finding the private passage readily, and impatient, it would seem, of farther delay, he had caught down a sword and target, and was about to enter the great gallery, with the purpose, doubtless, of fighting his way through all opposition.

"Hold, while you live," whispered Dalgetty, laying hold on him. "We must lie perdue, if possible. So bar we this door, that it may be thought MacCallum More would be private—and now let me make a reconnoisance for the private passage."

By looking behind the tapestry in various places, the Captain, at length discovered a private door, and behind that a winding passage, terminated by another door, which doubtless entered the chapel. But what was his disagreeable surprise to hear, on the other side of this second door, the sonorous voice of a divine in the act of preaching.

"This made the villain," he said, "recommend this to us as a private passage. I am strongly tempted to return and cut his throat."

He then opened very gently the door, which led into a latticed gallery used by the Marquis himself, the curtains of which were drawn, perhaps with the purpose of having it supposed that he was engaged in attendance upon divine worship, when, in fact, he was absent upon his secular affairs. There was no other person in the seat; for the family of the Marquis, such was the high state maintained in those days, sat during service in another gallery, placed somewhat lower than that of the great man himself. This being the case, Captain Dalgetty ventured to ensconce himself in the gallery, of which he carefully secured the door.

Never (although the expression be a bold one) was a sermon listened to with more impatience, and less edifi-

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cation, on the part of one, at least, of the audience. The Captain heard *sixteenthly—seventeenthly—eighteenthly,* and *to conclude* with a sort of feeling like protracted despair. But no man can lecture (for the service was called a lecture,) forever; and the discourse was at length closed, the clergyman not failing to make a profound bow towards the latticed gallery, little suspecting whom he honoured by that reverence. To judge from the haste with which they dispersed, the domestics of the Marquis were scarce more pleased with their late occupation than the anxious Captain Dalgetty; indeed, many of them being Highlandmen, had the excuse of not understanding a single word which the clergyman spoke, although they gave their attendance on his doctrine by the special order of MacCallum More, and would have done so had the preacher been a Turkish Imaum.

But although the congregation dispersed thus rapidly, the divine remained behind in the chapel, and walking up and down its Gothic precincts, seemed either to be meditating on what he had just been delivering, or preparing a fresh discourse for the next opportunity. Bold as he was, Dalgetty hesitated what he ought to do. Time, however, pressed, and every moment increased the chance of their escape being discovered by the jailor visiting the dungeon perhaps before his wonted time, and discovering the exchange which had been made there. At length, whispering Ranald, who watched all his motions, to follow him and preserve his countenance, Captain Dalgetty, with a very composed air, descended a flight of steps which led from the gallery into the body of the chapel. A less experienced adventurer would have endeavoured to pass the worthy clergyman rapidly, in hopes to escape unnoticed. But the Captain, who foresaw the manifest danger of failing in such an attempt, walked gravely to meet the divine upon his walk in the midst of the chancel, and pulling off his cap, was about to pass him after a formal reverence. But what was his surprise to view in the preacher the very same person with whom he had

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dined in the castle of Ardenvohr! Yet he speedily recovered his composure; and ere the clergyman could speak was the first to address him. "I could not," he said, leave this mansion without bequeathing to you, my very reverend sir, my humble thanks for the homily with which you have this evening favoured us."

"I did not observe sir," said the clergyman, "that you were in the chapel."

"It pleased the honourable Marquis," said Dalgetty, modestly, "to grace me with a seat in his own gallery." The divine bowed low at this intimation, knowing that such an honour was only vouchsafed to persons of very high rank. "It has been my fate, sir," said the Captain, "in the sort of wandering life which I have led, to have heard different preachers of different religions—as for example, Lutheran, Evangelical, Reformed, Calvinistical, and so forth, but never have I listened to such a homily as yours."

"Call it a lecture, worthy sir," said the divine, "such is the phrase of our church."

"Lecture, or homily," said Dalgetty, "it was, as the High Germans say, *ganz fortre flich;* and I could not leave this place without testifying unto you what inward emotions I have undergone during your edifying prelection; and how I am touched to the quick, that I should yesterday, during the refection, have seemed to infringe on the respect due to such a person as yourself."

"Alas! my worthy sir," said the clergyman, "we meet in this world as in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, not knowing against whom we may chance to encounter. In truth, it is no matter of marvel, if we sometimes jostle those, to whom, if known, we would yield all respect. Surely, sir, I would rather have taken you for a profane malignant, than for such a devout person as you prove, who reverences the great Master even in the meanest of his servants."

"It is always my custom to do so, learned sir," answered Dalgetty; "for, in the service of the immortal Gustavus—but I detain you from your meditations,"—his

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desire to speak of the King of Sweden being for once overpowered by the necessity of his circumstances.

"By no means, my worthy sir," said the clergyman. "What was, I pray you, the order of that great Prince, whose memory is so dear to every Protestant bosom?"

"Sir, the drums beat to prayers morning and evening, as regularly as for parade; and if a soldier passed without saluting the chaplain, he had an hour's ride on the wooden mare for his pains. Sir, I wish you a very good evening—I am obliged to depart the castle under Mac-Callum More's passport."

"Stay one instant, sir," said the preacher; "is there nothing I can do to testify my respect for the pupil of the great Gustavus, and so admirable a judge of preaching?"

"Nothing, sir," said the Captain, "but to show me the nearest way to the gate—and if you would have the kindness," he added, with great effrontery, "to let a servant bring my horse with him, the dark-grey gelding—call him Gustavus, and he will prick up his ears—for I know not where the castle-stables are situated, and my guide," he added, looking at Ranald, "speaks no English."

"I hasten to accommodate you," said the clergyman; "your way lies through that cloistered passage."

"Now, Heaven's blessing upon your vanity!" said the Captain to himself. "I was afraid I would have had to march off without Gustavus."

In fact, so effectually did the chaplain exert himself in behalf of so excellent a judge of composition, that while Dalgetty was parleying with the sentinels at the drawbridge, showing his passport, and giving the watch-word, a servant brought him his horse, ready saddled for the journey. In another place, the Captain's sudden appearance at large after having been publicly sent to prison, might have excited suspicion and inquiry; but the officers and domestics of the Marquis were accustomed to the mysterious policy of their master, and never supposed aught else than that he had been liberated and entrusted with some private commission by their master. In this belief, and having received the parole, they gave him free passage.

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Dalgetty rode slowly through the town of Inverary, the outlaw attending upon him like a foot-page at his horse's shoulder. As they passed the gibbet, the old man looked on the bodies and wrung his hands. The look and gesture were momentary, but expressive of indescribable anguish. Instantly recovering himself, Ranald, in passing, whispered somewhat to one of the females, who, like Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, seemed engaged in watching and mourning the victims of feudal injustice and cruelty. The woman started at his voice, but immediately collected herself, and returned for answer a slight inclination of the head.

Dalgetty continued his way out of the town, uncertain whether he should try to seize or hire a boat and cross the lake, or plunge into the woods, and there conceal himself from pursuit. In the former event he was liable to be instantly pursued by the galleys of the Marquis, which lay ready for sailing, their long yard-arms pointing to the wind; and what hope could he have, in an ordinary Highland fishing-boat to escape from them? If he made the latter choice, his chance either of supporting or concealing himself in those waste and unknown wildernesses, was in the highest degree precarious. The town lay now behind him, yet what hand to turn to for safety he was unable to determine, and began to be sensible, that in escaping from the dungeon at Inverary, desperate as the matter seemed, he had only accomplished the easiest part of a difficult task. If retaken, his fate was now certain; for the personal injury he had offered to a man so powerful and so vindictive, could be atoned for only by instant death. While he pondered these distressing reflections, and looked around with a countenance which plainly expressed indecision, Ranald MacEagh suddenly asked him, "which way he intended to journey?"

"And that, honest comrade," answered Dalgetty, "is precisely the question which I cannot answer you. Truly I begin to hold the opinion, Ranald, that we had better have stuck by the brown loaf and water-pitcher until Sir

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Duncan arrived, who, for his own honour, must have made some fight for me."

"Saxon," answered MacEagh, "do not regret having exchanged the foul breath of yonder dungeon for the free air of heaven. Above all, repent not that you have served a Son of the Mist. Put yourself under my guidance, and I will warrant your safety with my head."

"Can you guide me safe through these mountains, and back to the army of Montrose?" said Dalgetty.

"I can," answered MacEagh; "there lives not a man to whom the mountain passes, the caverns, the glens, the thickets and the corries are known, as they are to the Children of the Mist. While others crawl on the level ground, by the sides of lakes and streams, ours are the steep hollows of the inaccessible mountains, the birth-place of the desert springs. Not all the blood-hounds of Argyle can trace the fastnesses through which I can guide you."

"Say'st thou so, honest Ranald?" replied Dalgetty; "then have on with thee; for of a surety I shall never save the ship by my own pilotage."

The outlaw accordingly led the way into the wood, by which the castle is surrounded for several miles, walking with so much despatch as kept Gustavus at a round trot, and taking such a number of cross cuts and turns, that Captain Dalgetty speedily lost all idea where he might be, and all knowledge of the points of the compass. At length the path, which had gradually become more difficult, altogether ended among thickets and underwood. The roaring of a torrent was heard in the neighbourhood, the ground became in some places broken, in others boggy, and everywhere unfit for riding.

"What the foul fiend," said Dalgetty, "is to be done here? I must part with Gustavus, I fear."

"Take no care for your horse," said the outlaw; "he shall soon be restored to you."

As he spoke, he whistled in a low tone, and a lad, half-dressed in tartan, half-naked, having only his own shaggy hair, tied with a thong of leather, to protect his head and face from sun and weather, lean, and half-starved in as-

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pect, his wild grey eyes appearing to fill up ten times the proportion usually allotted to them in the human face, crept out, as a wild beast might have done, from a thicket of brambles and briars.

"Give your horse to the gillie," said Ranald MacEagh; "your life depends upon it."

"Och! och!" exclaimed the despairing veteran; "Eheu! as we used to say at Mareschal-College, must I leave Gustavus in such grooming?"

"Are you frantic, to lose time thus?" said his guide; "do we stand on friend's ground, that you should part with your horse as if he were your brother? I tell you, you shall have him again; but if you never saw the animal, is not life better than the best colt ever mare foaled?"

"And that is true too, mine honest friend," sighed Dalgetty; "yet if you knew but the value of Gustavus, and the things we two have done and suffered together—See, he turns back to look at me!—be kind to him, my good breechless friend, and I will requite you well." So saying, and withal sniffling a little to swallow his grief, he turned from the heart-rending spectacle in order to follow his guide.

To follow his guide was no easy matter, and soon required more agility than Captain Dalgetty could master. The very first plunge after he had parted from his charger, carried him, with little assistance from a few overhanging boughs, or projecting roots of trees, eight feet sheer down into the course of a torrent, up which the Son of the Mist led the way. Huge stones, over which they scrambled, thickets of thorn and brambles, through which they had to drag themselves, rocks which were to be climbed on the one side with much labour and pain, for the purpose of an equally precarious descent upon the other; all these, and many such interruptions, were surmounted by the light-footed and half-naked mountaineer, with an ease and velocity which excited the surprise and envy of Captain Dalgetty, who, encumbered by his head-piece, corslet, and other armour, not to mention his ponderous jack-boots, found himself at length so much exhausted by fatigue,

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and the difficulties of the road, that he sat down upon a stone in order to recover his breath, while he explained to Ranald MacEagh the difference betwixt travelling *expeditus* and *impeditus*, as these two military phrases were understood at Mareschal-College, Aberdeen. The sole answer of the mountaineer was to lay his hand on the soldier's arm, and point backward in the direction of the wind. Dalgetty could spy nothing, for evening was closing fast, and they were at the bottom of a dark ravine. But at length he could distinctly hear at a distance the sullen toll of a large bell.

"That," said he, "must be the alarm—the storm-clock, as the Germans call it."

"It strikes the hour of your death," answered Ranald, "unless you can accompany me a little farther. For every toll of that bell, a brave man has yielded up his soul."

"Truly, Ranald, my trusty friend," said Dalgetty, "I will not deny that the case may be soon my own; for, I am so forfoughen, (being, as I explained to you, *impeditus*, for had I been *expeditus*, I mind not pedestrian exercise the flourish of a fife,) that I think I had better ensconce myself in one of these bushes, and even lie quiet there to abide what fortune God shall send me. I entreat you, mine honest friend Ranald, to shift for yourself, and leave me to my fortune, as the Lion of the North, the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, my never-to-be-forgotten master, (whom you must surely have heard of, Ranald, though you may have heard of no one else,) said to Francis Albert, Duke of Saxe-Lauenburgh, when he was mortally wounded on the plains of Lutzen. Neither despair altogether of my safety, Ranald, seeing I have been in as great pinches as this in Germany—more especially, I remember me, that at the fatal battle of Nerlingen—after which I changed service"——

"If you would save your father's son's breath to help his child out of trouble, instead of wasting it upon the tales of Seannachies," said Ranald, who now grew impatient of the Captain's loquacity, "or if your feet could

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travel as fast as your tongue, you might yet lay your head on an unbloody pillow to-night."

"Something there is like military skill in that," replied the Captain, "although wantonly and irreverently spoken to an officer of rank But I hold it good to pardon such freedoms on a march, in respect of the Saturnalian license indulged in such cases to the troops of all nations. And now, resume thine office, friend Ranald, in respect I am well-breathed; or, to be more plain, *I prae, sequar*, as we used to say at Mareschal-College."

Comprehending his meaning rather from his motions than his language, the Son of the Mist again led the way, with an unerring precision that looked like instinct through a variety of ground the most difficult and broken that could well be imagined. Dragging along his ponderous boots, encumbered with thigh-pieces, gauntlets, corslet, and back-piece, not to mention the buff jerkin which he wore under all these arms, talking of his former exploits the whole way, though Ranald paid not the slightest attention to him, Captain Dalgetty contrived to follow his guide a considerable space farther, when the deep-mouthed baying of a hound was heard coming down the wind, as if opening on the scent of its prey.

"Black hound," said Ranald, "whose throat never boded good to a Child of the Mist, ill fortune to her who littered thee! hast thou already found our trace? But thou art too late, swart hound of darkness, and the deer has gained the herd."

So saying, he whistled very softly, and was answered in a tone equally low from the top of a pass, up which they had for some time been ascending. Mending their pace, they reached the top, where the moon, which had now risen bright and clear, showed to Dalgetty a party of ten or twelve Highlanders, and about as many women and children, by whom Ranald MacEagh was received with such transports of joy, as made his companion easily sensible, that those by whom he was surrounded, must of course be Children of the Mist. The place which they occupied well suited their name and habits. It was a

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beetling crag, round which winded a very narrow and broken foot-path, commanded in various places by the position which they held.

Ranald spoke anxiously and hastily to the children of his tribe, and the men came one by one to shake hands with Dalgetty, while the women, clamorous in their gratitude, pressed round to kiss even the hem of his garment.

"They plight their faith to you," said Ranald MacEagh, "for requital of the good deed you have done to the tribe this day."

"Enough said, Ranald," answered the soldier, "enough said—tell them I love not this shaking of hands—it confuses ranks and degrees in military service; and as to kissing of gauntlets, puldrons, and the like, I remember that the immortal Gustavus, as he rode through the streets of Nuremberg, being thus worshipped by the populace, (being doubtless far more worthy of it than a poor though honourable cavalier like myself,) did say unto them, in the way of rebuke, 'If you idolize me thus like a god, who shall assure you that the vengeance of Heaven will not soon prove me to be a mortal?'—And so here, I suppose, you intend to make a stand against your followers, Ranald—*voto a Dios*, as the Spaniard says?—a very pretty position, as pretty a position for a small peloton of men as I have seen in my service—no enemy can come towards it by the road without being at the mercy of cannon and musket.—But then, Ranald, my trusty comrade, you have no cannon, I dare to aver, and I do not see that any of these fellows have muskets either. So with what artillery you propose making good the pass, before you come to hand blows, truly, Ranald, it passeth my apprehension."

"With the weapons, and with the courage, of our fathers," said MacEagh, and made the Captain observe, that the men of his party were armed with bows and arrows.

"Bows and arrows!" exclaimed Dalgetty; "ha! ha! ha! have we Robin Hood and Little John back again? Bows and arrows! why, the sight has not been seen in civilized war for a hundred years. Bows and arrows!

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and why not with weavers-beams, as in the days of Goliah? Ah! that Dugald Dalgetty, of Drumthwacket, should live to see men fight with bows and arrows!—The immortal Gustavus would never have believed it—nor Wallenstein—nor Butler—nor old Tilly.—Well, Ranald, a cat can have but its claws—since bows and arrows are the word, e'en let us make the best of it. Only, as I do not understand the scope and range of such old-fashioned artillery, you must make the best disposition you can out of your own head; for *my* taking the command, whilk I would have gladly done had you been to fight with any christian weapons, is out of the question, when you are to combat like quivered Numidians. I will, however, play my part with my pistols in the approaching melley, in respect my carabine unhappily remains at Gustavus's saddle.—My service and thanks to you," he continued, addressing a mountaineer who offered him a bow; "Dugald Dalgetty may say of himself, as he learned at Mareschal-College,

> Non eget Mauri jaculis, neque arcu,
> Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
> Fusce, pharetra;

whilk is to say——"

Ranald MacEagh a second time imposed silence on the talkative commander as before, by pulling his sleeve, and pointing down the pass. The bay of the bloodhound was now approaching nearer and nearer, and they could hear the voices of several persons who accompanied the animal, and hallooed to each other as they dispersed occasionally, either in the hurry of their advance, or in order to search more accurately the thickets as they came along. They were obviously drawing nearer and nearer every moment. MacEagh, in the meantime, proposed to Captain Dalgetty to disencumber himself of his armour, and gave him to understand that the women should transport it to a place of safety.

"I crave your pardon, sir," said Dalgetty, "such is not the rule of our foreign service; in respect I remember the regiment of Finland cuirassiers reprimanded, and

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their kettle-drums taken from them, by the immortal Gustavus, because they had assumed the permission to march without their corslets, and to leave them with the baggage. Neither did they strike kettle-drums again at the head of that famous regiment, until they behaved themselves so notably at the field of Leipsic; a lesson whilk is not to be forgotten, any more than that exclamation of the immortal Gustavus—'Now shall I know if my officers love me, by their putting on their armour; since, if my officers are slain, who shall lead my soldiers into victory?' Nevertheless, friend Ranald, this is without prejudice to my being rid of these somewhat heavy boots, providing I can obtain any other succedaneum; for I presume not to say that my bare soles are fortified so as to endure the flints and thorns, as seems to be the case with your followers."

To rid the Captain of his cumbrous greaves, and case his feet in a pair of brogues made out of deer-skin, which a Highlander stripped off for his accommodation, was the work of a minute, and Dalgetty found himself much lightened by the exchange. He was in the act of recommending to Ranald MacEagh, to send two or three of his followers a little lower to reconnoitre the pass, and, at the same time, somewhat to extend his front, placing two detached archers at each flank by way of posts of observation, when the near cry of the hound apprized them, that the pursuers were at the bottom of the pass. All was then dead silence; for, loquacious as he was on other occasions, Captain Dalgetty knew well the necessity of an ambush keeping itself under covert.

The moon gleamed on the broken path-way, and on the projecting cliffs of rock round which it winded, its light intercepted here and there by the branches of bushes and dwarf-trees, which, finding nourishment in the crevices of the rocks, in some places overshadowed the brow and ledge of the precipice. Below, a thick copse-wood lay in deep and dark shadow, somewhat resembling the billows of a half-seen ocean. From the bosom of that darkness, and close to the bottom of the precipice, the hound

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was heard at intervals baying fearfully, sounds which were redoubled by the echoes of the woods and rocks around. At intervals, these sunk into deep silence, interrupted only by the plashing noise of a small runnel of water, which partly fell from the rock, partly found a more silent passage to the bottom along its projecting surface. Voices of men were also heard in stifled converse below; it seemed as if the pursuers had not discovered the narrow path which led to the top of the rock, or that, having discovered it, the peril of the ascent, joined to the imperfect light, and the uncertainty whether it might not be defended, made them hesitate to attempt it.

At length a shadowy figure was seen, which raised itself up from the abyss of darkness below, and emerging into the pale moonlight, began cautiously and slowly to ascend the rocky path. The outline was so distinctly marked, that Captain Dalgetty could discover not only the person of a Highlander, but the long gun which he carried in his hand, and the plume of feathers which decorated his bonnet. "*Tausend teiflen!* that I should say so, and so like to be near my latter end!" ejaculated the Captain, but under his breath, "what will become of us, now they have brought musketry to encounter our archers?"

But just as the pursuer had attained a projecting piece of rock about halfway up the ascent, and, pausing, made a signal for those who were still at the bottom to follow him, an arrow whistled from the bow of one of the Children of the Mist, and transfixed him with so fatal a wound, that, without a single effort to save himself, he lost his balance, and fell headlong from the cliff on which he stood into the darkness below. The crash of the boughs which received him, and the heavy sound of his fall from thence to the ground, was followed by a cry of horror and surprise, which burst from his followers. The Children of the Mist, encouraged in proportion to the alarm this first success had caused among the pursuers, echoed back the clamour with a loud and shrill yell of exultation, and showing themselves on the brow of the precipice, with wild cries and vindictive gestures, endeavoured to impress

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on their enemies a sense at once of their courage, their numbers, and their state of defence. Even Captain Dalgetty's military prudence did not prevent his rising up, and calling out to Ranald more loud than prudence warranted, "*Carocco*, comrade, as the Spaniard says! The long bow for ever! In my poor apprehension now, were you to order a file to advance and take position"——

"The Sassenach!" cried a voice from beneath,—"mark the Sassenach sidier! I see the glitter of his breast-plate." At the same time three muskets were discharged; and while one ball rattled against the corslet of proof, to the strength of which our valiant Captain had been more than once indebted for his life, another penetrated the armour which covered the front of his left thigh, and stretched him on the ground. Ranald instantly seized him in his arms, and bore him back from the edge of the precipice, while he dolefully ejaculated, "I always told the immortal Gustavus, Wallenstein, Tilly, and other men of the sword, that, in my poor mind, taslets ought to be made musket-proof."

With two or three earnest words in Gaelic, MacEagh commended the wounded man to the charge of the females, who were in the rear of his little party, and was then about to return to the contest. But Dalgetty detained him, grasping a firm hold of his plaid.—"I know not how this matter may end—but I request you will inform Montrose, that I died like a follower of the immortal Gustavus—and I pray you, take heed how you quit your present strength, even for the purpose of pursuing the enemy, if you gain any advantage—and—and"——

Here Dalgetty's breath and eye-sight began to fail him through loss of blood, and MacEagh, availing himself of this circumstance, extricated from his grasp the end of his own mantle, and substituted that of a female, by which the Captain held stoutly, thereby securing, as he conceived, the outlaw's attention to the military instructions which he continued to pour forth while he had any breath to utter them, though they became gradually more and more

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incoherent—" And, comrade, you will be sure to keep your musketeers in advance of your stand of pikes, Lochaber-axes, and two-handed swords—Stand fast, dragoons, on the left flank !—where was I ?—Ay, and, Ranald, if ye be minded to retreat, leave some lighted matches burning on the branches of the trees—it shows as if they were lined with shot—but I forget—ye have no match-locks nor habergeons—only bows and arrows—bows and arrows ! ha ! ha ! ha !"

Here the Captain sunk back in an exhausted condition, altogether unable to resist the sense of the ludicrous which, as a modern man-at-arms, he connected with the idea of these ancient weapons of war. It was a long time ere he recovered his senses ; and, in the meantime, we leave him in the care of the Daughters of the Mist ; nurses as kind and attentive in reality, as they were wild and uncouth in outward appearance.

CHAPTER XV.

But if no faithless action stain
  Thy true and constant word,
I'll make thee famous by my pen,
  And glorious by my sword.

I'll serve thee in such noble ways
  As ne'er were known before ;
I'll deck and crown thy head with bays,
  And love thee more and more.

Montrose's Lines.

We must now leave, with whatever regret, the valiant Captain Dalgetty, to recover of his wounds, or otherwise as fate shall determine, in order briefly to trace the military operations of Montrose, worthy as they are of a more important page, and a better historian. By the assistance of the chieftains whom we have commemorated, and more especially by the junction of the Murrays, Stewarts, and

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other clans of Athole, which were peculiarly zealous in the royal cause, he soon assembled an army of two or three thousand Highlanders, to whom he successfully united the Irish under Colkitto. This last leader, who, to the great embarrassment of Milton's commentators, is commemorated in one of that great poet's sonnets,* was properly named Alister, or Alexander M'Donnell, by birth a Scottish islesman, and related to the Earl of Antrim, to whose patronage he owed the command assigned him in the Irish troops. In many respects he merited this distinction. He was brave to intrepidity, and almost to insensibility; very strong and active in person, completely master of his weapons, and always ready to show the example in the extremity of danger. To counterbalance these good qualities, it must be recorded that he was inexperienced in military tactics, and of a jealous and presumptuous disposition, which often lost to Montrose the fruits of Colkitto's gallantry. Yet such is the predominance of outward personal qualities in the eyes of a wild people, that the feats of strength and courage shown by this champion, seem to have made a stronger impression upon the minds of the Highlanders, than the military skill and chivalrous spirit of the great Marquis of Montrose. Numerous traditions are still preserved in the Highland glens concerning Alister M'Donnell, though the name of Montrose is rarely mentioned among them.

The point upon which Montrose finally assembled his little army, was in Strathearn, on the verge of the High-

* Milton's book, entitled Tetrachordon, had been ridiculed, it would seem, by the divines assembled at Westminster, and others, on account of the hardness of the title; and Milton in his sonnet retaliates upon the barbarous Scottish names which the Civil War had made familiar to English ears :—

——— why, is it harder, sirs, than Gordon,
Colkitto, or M'Donald, or Gallasp?
These rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.

"We may suppose," says Bishop Newton, "that these were persons of note among the Scotch ministers, who were for pressing and enforcing the covenant;" whereas Milton only intends to ridicule the barbarism of Scottish names in general, and quotes, indiscriminately, that of Gillespie one of the Apostles of the Covenant, and those of Colkitto and M'Donnell, (both belonging to one person) one of its bitterest enemies.

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lands of Perthshire, so as to menace the principal town of that county.

His enemies were not unprepared for his reception. Argyle, at the head of his Highlanders, was dogging the steps of the Irish from the west to the east, and by force, fear, or influence, had collected an army nearly sufficient to have given battle to that under Montrose. The Lowlands were also prepared, for reasons which we assigned at the beginning of this tale. A body of six thousand infantry, and six or seven thousand cavalry, which profanely assumed the title of God's army, had been hastily assembled from the shires of Fife, Angus, Perth, Stirling, and the neighbouring counties. A much less force in former times, nay even in the preceding reign, would have been sufficient to have secured the Lowland against a more formidable descent of Highlanders, than those united under Montrose; but times had changed strangely within the last half century. Before that period, the Lowlanders were as constantly engaged in war as the mountaineers, and were incomparably better disciplined and armed. The favourite Scottish order of battle somewhat resembled the Macedonian phalanx. Their infantry formed a compact body, armed with long spears, impenetrable even to the men-at-arms of the age, though well mounted, and arrayed in complete proof. It may easily be conceived, therefore, that their ranks could not be broken by the disorderly charge of Highland infantry armed for close combat only, with swords, and ill-furnished with missile weapons, and having no artillery whatever. This habit of fight was in a great measure changed by the introduction of muskets into the Scottish Lowland service, which, not being as yet combined with the bayonet, was a formidable weapon at a distance, but gave no assurance against the enemy who rushed on to close quarters. The pike, indeed, was not wholly disused in the Scottish army; but it was no longer the favourite weapon, nor was it relied upon as formerly by those in whose hands it was placed; insomuch that Daniel Lupton a tactician of the day, has written a book expressly upon the superiority of the

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musket. This change commenced as early as the wars of Gustavus Adolphus, whose marches were made with such rapidity, that the pike was very soon thrown aside in his army, and exchanged for fire-arms. A circumstance which necessarily accompanied this change, as well as the establishment of standing armies, whereby war became a trade, was the introduction of a laborious and complicated system of discipline, combining a variety of words of command with corresponding operations and manœuvres, the neglect of any one of which was sure to throw the whole into confusion. War, therefore, as practised among most nations of Europe, had assumed much more than formerly the character of a profession or mystery, to which previous practice and experience were indispensable requisites. Such was the natural consequence of standing armies, which had almost everywhere, and particularly in the long German wars, superseded what may be called the natural discipline of the feudal militia.

The Scottish Lowland militia, therefore, laboured under a double disadvatange when opposed to Highlanders. They were divested of the spear, a weapon which, in the hands of their ancestors, had so often repelled the impetuous assaults of the mountaineer; and they were subjected to a new and complicated species of discipline, well adapted, perhaps, to the use of regular troops, who could be rendered completely masters of it, but tending only to confuse the ranks of citizen-soldiers, by whom it was rarely practised, and imperfectly understood. So much has been done in our own time in bringing back tactics to their first principles, and in getting rid of the pedantry of war, that it is easy for us to estimate the disadvantages under which a half-trained militia laboured, who were taught to consider success as depending upon their exercising with precision a system of tactics, which they probably only so far comprehended as to find out when they were wrong, but without the power of getting right again. Neither can it be denied, that, in the material points of military habits and warlike spirit, the Low-

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landers of the seventeenth century had sunk far beneath their Highland countrymen.

From the earliest period down to the union of the crowns, the whole kingdom of Scotland, Lowlands as well as Highlands, had been the constant scene of war, foreign and domestic; and there was probably scarce one of its hardy inhabitants, between the age of sixteen and sixty, who was not as willing in point of fact, as he was literally bound in law, to assume arms at the first call of his liege lord, or of a royal proclamation. The law remained the same in sixteen hundred and forty-five as a hundred years before, but the race of those subjected to it had been bred up under very different feelings. They had sat in quiet under their vine and under their fig-tree, and a call to battle involved a change of life as new as it was disagreeable. Such of them, also, who lived near unto the Highlands, were in continual and disadvantageous contact with the restless inhabitants of those mountains, by whom their cattle were driven off, their dwellings plundered, and their persons insulted, and who had acquired over them that sort of superiority arising from a constant system of aggression. The Lowlanders, who lay more remote and out of reach of these depredations, were influenced by the exaggerated reports circulated concerning the Highlanders, whom, as totally differing in laws, language, and dress, they were induced to regard as a nation of savages, equally void of fear and of humanity. These various prepossessions, joined to the less warlike habits of the Lowlanders, and their imperfect knowledge of the new and complicated system of discipline for which they had exchanged their natural mode of fighting, placed them at great disadvantage when opposed to the Highlander in the field of battle. The mountaineers, on the contrary, with the arms and courage of their fathers, possessed also their simple and natural system of tactics, and bore down with the fullest confidence upon an enemy, to whom anything they had been taught of discipline was, like Saul's armour upon David, a hinder-

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ance rather than a help, "because they had not proved it."

It was with such disadvantages on the one side, and such advantages on the other, to counterbalance the difference of superior numbers and the presence of artillery and cavalry, that Montrose encountered the army of Lord Elcho upon the field of Tippermuir. The presbyterian clergy had not been wanting in their efforts to rouse the spirit of their followers; and one of them, who harangued the troops on the very day of battle, hesitated not to say, that if ever God spoke by his mouth, he promised them, in His name, that day, a great and assured victory. The cavalry and artillery were also reckoned sure warrants of success, as the novelty of their attack had upon former occasions been very discouraging to the Highlanders. The place of meeting was an open heath, and the ground afforded little advantage to either party, except that it allowed the horse of the Covenanters to act with effect.

A battle, upon which so much depended, was never more easily decided. The Lowland cavalry made a show of charging; but, whether thrown into disorder by the fire of musketry, or deterred by a disaffection to the service said to have prevailed among the gentlemen, they made no impression on the Highlanders whatever, and recoiled in disorder from ranks which had neither bayonets nor pikes to protect them. Montrose saw, and instantly availed himself of this advantage. He ordered his whole army to charge, which they performed with the wild and desperate valour peculiar to mountaineers. One officer of the Covenanters alone, trained in the Italian wars, made a desperate defence upon the right wing. In every other point their line was penetrated at the first onset; and this advantage once obtained, the Lowlanders were utterly unable to contend at close quarters with their more agile and athletic enemies. Many were slain on the field, and such a number in the pursuit, that above one-third of the Covenanters were reported to have fallen; in which number, however, must be computed a great many fat

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burgesses who broke their wind in the flight, and thus died without stroke of sword.*

The victors obtained possession of Perth, and obtained considerable sums of money, as well as ample supplies of arms and ammunition. But those advantages were to be balanced against an almost insurmountable inconvenience that uniformly attended a Highland army. The clans could be in no respect induced to consider themselves as regular soldiers, or to act as such. Even so late as the year 1745–6, when the Chevalier Charles Edward, by way of making an example, caused a soldier to be shot for desertion, the Highlanders, who composed his army, were affected as much by indignation as by fear. They could not conceive any principle of justice upon which a man's life could be taken, for merely going home when it did not suit him to remain longer with the army. Such had been the uniform practice of their fathers. When a battle was over, the campaign was, in their opinion, ended; if it was lost, they sought safety in their mountains—if won, they returned there to secure their booty. At other times they had their cattle to look after, and their harvests to sow or reap, without which their families would have perished for want. In either case, there was an end of their services for the time; and though they were easily enough recalled by the prospect of fresh adventures and more plunder, yet the opportunity of success was, in the meantime, lost, and could not afterwards be recovered. This circumstance serves to show, even if history had not made us acquainted with the same fact, that the Highlanders had never been accustomed to make war with the view of permanent conquest, but only with the hope of deriving temporary advantage, or deciding some immediate quarrel. It also explains the reason why Montrose, with all his splendid successes, never obtained any secure or permanent footing in the Lowlands, and why even those Lowland noblemen and gentlemen, who were in-

* We choose to quote our authority for a fact so singular:—"A great many burgesses were killed—twenty-five householders in St. Andrews—many were bursten in the flight, and died without stroke."—*See Baillie's Letters, vol. ii. p. 92.*

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clined to the royal cause, showed diffidence and reluctance to join an army of a character so desultory and irregular, as might lead them at all times to apprehend that the Highlanders, securing themselves by a retreat to their mountains, would leave whatever Lowlanders might have joined them to the mercy of an offended and predominant enemy. The same consideration will also serve to account for the sudden marches which Montrose was obliged to undertake, in order to recruit his army in the mountains, and for the rapid changes of fortune, by which we often find him obliged to retreat from before those enemies over whom he had recently been victorious. If there should be any who read these tales for any further purpose than that of immediate amusement, they will find these remarks not unworthy of their recollection.

It was owing to such causes, the slackness of the Lowland loyalists and the temporary desertion of his Highland followers, that Montrose found himself, even after the decisive victory of Tippermuir, in no condition to face the second army with which Argyle advanced upon him from the westward. In this emergency, supplying by velocity the want of strength, he moved suddenly from Perth to Dundee, and being refused admission into that town, fell northward upon Aberdeen, where he expected to be joined by the Gordons and other loyalists. But the zeal of these gentlemen, was, for the time, effectually bridled by a large body of Covenanters, commanded by the Lord Burleigh, and supposed to amount to three thousand men. These Montrose boldly attacked with half their number. The battle was fought under the walls of the city, and the resolute valour of Montrose's followers was again successful against every disadvantage.

But it was the fate of this great commander always to gain the glory, but seldom to reap the fruits of victory. He had scarcely time to repose his small army in Aberdeen, ere he found, on the one hand, that the Gordons were likely to be deterred from joining him, by the reasons we have mentioned, with some others peculiar to their chief, the

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Marquis of Huntly; on the other hand, Argyle, whose forces had been augmented by those of several Lowland noblemen, advanced towards Montrose at the head of an army much larger than he had yet had to cope with. These troops moved, indeed, with slowness, corresponding to the cautious character of their commander; but even that caution rendered Argyle's approach formidable, since his very advance implied, that he was at the head of an army irresistibly superior.

There remained one mode of retreat open to Montrose, and he adopted it. He threw himself into the Highlands, where he could set pursuit at defiance, and where he was sure, in every glen, to recover those recruits who had left his standard to deposit their booty in their native fastnesses. It was thus that the singular character of the army which Montrose commanded, while, on the one hand, it rendered his victory in some degree nugatory, enabled him, on the other, under the most disadvantageous circumstances, to secure his retreat, recruit his forces, and render himself more formidable than ever to the enemy before whom he had lately been unable to make a stand.

On the present occasion he threw himself into Badenoch, and rapidly traversing that district, as well as the neighbouring country of Athole, he alarmed the Covenanters by successive attacks upon various unexpected points, and spread such general dismay, that repeated orders were despatched by the Parliament to Argyle, their commander, to engage and disperse Montrose at all rates.

These commands from his superiors neither suited the haughty spirit, nor the temporizing and cautious policy, of the nobleman to whom they were addressed. He paid, accordingly, no regard to them, but limited his efforts to intrigues among Montrose's few Lowland followers, many of whom had become disgusted with the prospect of a Highland campaign, which exposed their persons to intolerable fatigue, and left their estates at the Covenanters' mercy. Accordingly, several of them left Montrose's camp at this period. He was joined, however, by a body

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of forces of more congenial spirit, and far better adapted to the situation in which he found himself. This reinforcement consisted of a large body of Highlanders, whom Colkitto, despatched for that purpose, had levied in Argyleshire. Among the most distinguished was John of Moidart, called the Captain of Clan Ranald, with the Stewarts of Appin, the Clan Gregor, the Clan M'Nab, and other tribes of inferior distinction. By these means, Montrose's army was so formidably increased, that Argyle cared no longer to remain in the command of that opposed to him, but returned to Edinburgh, and there threw up his commission, under pretence that his army was not supplied with reinforcements and provisions in the manner in which they ought to have been. From thence the Marquis returned to Inverary, there, in full security, to govern his feudal vassals, and patriarchal followers, and to repose himself in safety on the faith of the Clan proverb already quoted—"It is a far cry to Lochow."

CHAPTER XVI.

Such mountains steep, such craggy hills,
His army on one side inclose;
The other side, great griesly gills
Did fence with fenny mire and moss.

Which, when the Earl understood,
He council crav'd of captains all,
Who bade set forth with mournful mood,
And take such fortune as would fall.

Flodden Field, an Ancient Poem.

Montrose had now a splendid career in his view, provided he could obtain the consent of his gallant, but desultory troops, and their independent chieftains. The Lowlands lay open before him without an army adequate to check his career; for Argyle's followers had left the Covenanters' host, when their master threw up

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his commission, and many other troops, tired of the war, had taken the same opportunity to disband themselves. By descending Strath-Tay, therefore, one of the most convenient passes from the Highlands, Montrose had only to present himself in the Lowlands, in order to rouse the slumbering spirit of chivalry and of loyalty which animated the gentlemen to the north of the Forth. The possession of these districts, with or without a victory, would give him the command of a wealthy and fertile part of the kingdom, and would enable him, by regular pay, to place his army on a more permanent footing, to penetrate as far as the capital, perhaps from thence to the Border, where he deemed it possible to communicate with the yet unsubdued forces of King Charles.

Such was the plan of operations by which the truest glory was to be acquired, and the most important success insured for the royal cause. Accordingly it did not escape the ambitious and daring spirit of him whose services had already acquired him the title of the Great Marquis. But other motives actuated many of his followers, and perhaps were not without their secret and unacknowledged influence upon his own feelings.

The Western Chiefs in Montrose's army, almost to a man, regarded the Marquis of Argyle as the most direct and proper object of hostilities. Almost all of them had felt his power; almost all, in withdrawing their fencible men from their own glens, left their families and property exposed to his vengeance; all, without exception, were desirous of diminishing his sovereignty; and most of them lay so near his territories, that they might reasonably hope to be gratified by a share of his spoil. To these Chiefs the possession of Inverary and its castle was an event infinitely more important and desirable than the capture of Edinburgh. The latter event could only afford their clansmen a little transitory pay or plunder; the former insured to the Chiefs themselves indemnity for the past, and security for the future. Besides these personal reasons, the leaders, who favoured this opinion, plausibly urged, that though, at his first descent into the Low-

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lands, Montrose might be superior to the enemy, yet every day's march he made from the hills must diminish his own forces, and expose him to the accumulated superiority of any army which the Covenanters could collect from the Lowland levies and garrisons. On the other hand, by crushing Argyle effectually, he would not only permit his present western friends to bring out that proportion of their forces which they must otherwise leave at home for protection of their families ; but further, he would draw to his standard several tribes already friendly to his cause, but who were prevented from joining him by fear of MacCallum More.

These arguments, as we have already hinted, found something responsive in Montrose's own bosom, not quite consonant with the general heroism of his character. The houses of Argyle and Montrose had been, in former times, repeatedly opposed to each other in war and in politics, and the superior advantages acquired by the former, had made them the subject of envy and dislike to the neighbouring family, who, conscious of equal desert, had not been so richly rewarded. This was not all. The existing heads of these rival families had stood in the most marked opposition to each other since the commencement of the present troubles. Montrose, conscious of the superiority of his talents, and of having rendered great service to the Covenanters at the beginning of the war, had expected from that party the supereminence of counsel and command, which they judged it safer to entrust to the more limited faculties, and more extensive power, of his rival Argyle. The having awarded this preference, was an injury which Montrose never forgave the Covenanters ; and he was still less likely to extend his pardon to Argyle, to whom he had been postponed. He was therefore stimulated by every feeling of hatred which could animate a fiery temper in a fierce age, to seek for revenge upon the enemy of his house and person ; and it is probable that these private motives operated not a little upon his mind, when he found the principal part of his follow-

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ers determined rather to undertake an expedition against the territories of Argyle, than to take the far more decisive step of descending at once into the Lowlands.

Yet, whatever temptation Montrose found to carry into effect his attack upon Argyleshire, he could not easily bring himself to renounce the splendid achievement of a descent upon the Lowlands. He held more than one council with the principal Chiefs, combating, perhaps, his own secret inclination as well as theirs. He laid before them the extreme difficulty of marching even a Highland army from the eastward into Argyleshire, through passes scarcely practicable for shepherds and deer-stalkers, and over mountains with which even the clans lying nearest to them did not pretend to be thoroughly acquainted. These difficulties were greatly enhanced by the season of the year, which was now advancing towards December, when the mountain-passes, in themselves so difficult, might be expected to be rendered utterly impassable by snow-storms. These objections neither satisfied nor silenced the Chiefs, who insisted upon their ancient mode of making war, by driving the cattle, which, according to the Gaelic phrase, "fed upon the grass of their enemy." The council was dismissed late at night, and without coming to any decision, excepting that the Chiefs, who supported the opinion that Argyle should be invaded, promised to seek out among their followers those who might be most capable of undertaking the office of guides upon the expedition.

Montrose had retired to the cabin which served him for a tent, and stretched himself upon a bed of dry fern, the only place of repose which it afforded. But he courted sleep in vain, for the visions of ambition excluded those of Morpheus. In one moment he imagined himself displaying the royal banner from the reconquered Castle of Edinburgh, detaching assistance to a monarch whose crown depended upon his success, and receiving in requital all the advantages and preferments which could be heaped upon him whom a king delighteth to honour. At another time this dream, splendid as it

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was, faded before the vision of gratified vengeance, and personal triumph over a personal enemy. To surprise Argyle in his strong-hold of Inverary—to crush in him at once the rival of his own house and the chief support of the Presbyterians—to show the Covenanters the difference between the preferred Argyle and the postponed Montrose, was a picture too flattering to feudal vengeance to be easily relinquished.

While he lay thus busied with contradictory thoughts and feelings, the soldier who stood sentinel upon his quarters announced to the Marquis, that two persons desired to speak with his Excellency.

"Their names?" answered Montrose, "and the cause of their urgency at such a late hour?"

On these points, the sentinel, who was one of Colkitto's Irishmen, could afford his general little information; so that Montrose, who at such a period durst refuse access to no one, lest he might have been neglecting some important intelligence, gave directions, as a necessary precaution, to put the guard under arms, and then prepared to receive his untimely visiters. His groom of the chambers had scarce lighted a pair of torches, and Montrose himself had scarce risen from his couch, when two men entered, one wearing a Lowland dress of shamoy leather, worn almost to tatters; the other, a tall upright old Highlander, of a complexion which might be termed iron-grey, wasted and worn by frost and tempest.

"What may be your commands with me, my friends?" said the Marquis, his hand almost unconsciously seeking the but of one of his pistols; for the period, as well as the time of night, warranted suspicions which the good mien of his visiters was not by any means calculated to remove.

"I pray leave to congratulate you," said the Lowlander, "my most noble General, and Right Honourable Lord, upon the great battles which you have achieved since I had the fortune to be detached from you. It was a pretty affair that tuilzie at Tippermuir; nevertheless, if I might be permitted to counsel"——

"Before doing so," said the Marquis, "will you be

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pleased to let me know who is so kind as to favour me with his opinion ?"

" Truly, my lord," replied the man, " I should have hoped that was unnecessary, seeing it is not so long since I took on in your service, under promise of a commission as Major, with half a dollar of daily pay and half a dollar of arrears ; and I am to trust your lordship has not forgotten my pay as well as my person ?"

" My good friend, Major Dalgetty," said Montrose, who by this time perfectly recollected his man, " you must consider what important things have happened to put my friends' faces out of my memory, besides this imperfect light ; but all conditions shall be kept. And what news from Argyleshire, my good Major ? We have long given you up for lost, and I was now preparing to take the most signal vengeance upon the old fox who infringed the law of arms in your person."

" Truly, my noble lord," said Dalgetty, " I have no desire that my return should put any stop to so proper and becoming an intention ; verily, it is in no shape in the Earl of Argyle's favour or mercy that I now stand before you, and I shall be no intercessor for him. But my escape is, under Heaven, and the excellent dexterity which, as an old and accomplished cavalier, I displayed in effecting the same,—I say, under these, it is owing to the assistance of this old Highlander, whom I venture to recommend to your lordship's special favour, as the instrument of saving your lordship's to command, Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket."

" A thank-worthy service," said the Marquis, gravely, " which shall certainly be requited in the manner it deserves."

" Kneel down, Ranald," said Major Dalgetty, (as we must now call him,) " kneel down, and kiss his Excellency's hand."

The prescribed form of acknowledgment not being according to the custom of Ranald's country, he contented himself with folding his arms on his bosom, and making a low inclination of his head.

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"This poor man, my lord," said Major Dalgetty, continuing his speech with a dignified air of protection towards Ranald MacEagh, "has strained all his slender means to defend my person from mine enemies, although having no better weapons of a missile sort than bows and arrows, whilk your lordship will hardly believe."

"You will see a great many such weapons in my camp," said Montrose, "and we find them serviceable."[14]

"Serviceable, my lord!" said Dalgetty; "I trust your lordship will permit me to be surprised—bows and arrows!—I trust you will forgive my recommending the substitution of muskets, the first convenient opportunity. But besides defending me, this honest Highlander also was at the pains of curing me, in respect that I had got a touch of the wars in my retreat, which merits my best requital in this special introduction of him to your lordship's notice and protection."

"What is your name, my friend?" said Montrose, turning to the Highlander.

"It may not be spoken," answered the mountaineer.

"That is to say," interpreted Major Dalgetty, "he desires to have his name concealed, in respect he hath in former days taken a castle, slain certain children, and done other things, whilk, as your good lordship knows, are often practised in war time, but excite no benevolence towards the perpetrator in the friends of those who sustain injury. I have known, in my military experience, many brave cavaliers put to death by the boors, simply for having used military license upon the country."

"I understand," said Montrose: "This person is at feud with some of our followers. Let him retire to the court of guard, and we will think of the best mode of protecting him."

"You hear, Ranald," said Major Dalgetty, with an air of superiority, "his Excellency wishes to hold privy council with me, you must go to the court of guard. He does not know where that is, poor fellow!—he is a young soldier for so old a man; I will put him under the

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charge of a sentinel, and return to your lordship incontinent." He did so, and returned accordingly.

Montrose's first inquiry respected the embassy to Inverary; and he listened with attention to Dalgetty's reply, notwithstanding the prolixity of the Major's narrative. It required an effort from the Marquis to maintain his attention; but no one better knew, that where information is to be derived from the report of such agents as Dalgetty, it can only be obtained by suffering them to tell their story in their own way. Accordingly the Marquis's patience was at length rewarded. Among other spoils which the Captain thought himself at liberty to take, was a packet of Argyle's private papers. These he consigned to the hands of his general; a humour of accounting, however, which went no farther, for I do not understand that he made any mention of the purse of gold which he had appropriated at the same time that he made seizure of the papers aforesaid. Snatching a torch from the wall, Montrose was in an instant deeply engaged in the perusal of these documents, in which it is probable he found something to animate his personal resentment against his rival Argyle.

"Does he not fear me?" said he; "then he shall feel me. Will he fire my castle of Murdoch?—Inverary shall raise the first smoke.—O for a guide through the skirts of Strath-Fillan!"

Whatever might be Dalgetty's personal conceit, he understood his business sufficiently to guess at Montrose's meaning. He instantly interrupted his own prolix narration of the skirmish which had taken place, and the wound he had received in his retreat, and began to speak to the point which he saw interested his general.

"If," said he, "your Excellency wishes to make an infall into Argyleshire, this poor man, Ranald, of whom I told you, together with his children and companions, know every pass into that land, both leading from the east and from the north."

"Indeed!" said Montrose; "what reason have you to believe their knowledge so extensive?"

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"So please your Excellency," answered Dalgetty, "during the weeks that I remained with them for cure of my wound, they were repeatedly obliged to shift their quarters, in respect of Argyle's repeated attempts to repossess himself of the person of an officer who was honoured with your Excellency's confidence; so that I had occasion to admire the singular dexterity and knowledge of the face of the country with which they alternately achieved their retreat and their advance; and when, at length, I was able to repair to your Excellency's standard, this honest simple creature, Ranald MacEagh, guided me by paths which my steed Gustavus, (which your lordship may remember) trod with perfect safety, so that I said to myself, that where guides, spies, or intelligencers, were required in a Highland campaign in that western country, more expert persons than he and his attendants could not possibly be desired."

"And can you answer for this man's fidelity?" said Montrose; "what is his name and condition?"

"He is an outlaw and robber by profession, and something also of a homicide or murderer," answered Dalgetty; "and by name, called Ranald MacEagh; whilk signifies, Ranald, the Son of the Mist."

"I should remember something of that name," said Montrose, pausing: "Did not these Children of the Mist perpetrate some act of cruelty upon the M'Aulays?"

Major Dalgetty mentioned the circumstance of the murder of the forester, and Montrose's active memory at once recalled all the circumstances of the feud.

"It is most unlucky," said Montrose, "this inexpiable quarrel between these men and the M'Aulays. Allan has borne himself bravely in these wars, and possesses, by the wild mystery of his behaviour and language, so much influence over the minds of his countrymen, that the consequences of disobliging him might be serious. At the same time, these men being so capable of rendering useful service, and being, as you say, Major Dalgetty, perfectly trust-worthy"——

"I will pledge my pay and arrears, my horse and arms, my head and neck, upon their fidelity," said the

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Major ; " and your Excellency knows, that a soldado could say no more for his own father."

" True," said Montrose ; " but as this is a matter of particular moment, I would willingly know the grounds of so positive an assurance."

" Concisely then, my lord," said the Major, " not only did they disdain to profit by a handsome reward which Argyle did me the honour to place upon this poor head of mine, and not only did they abstain from pillaging my personal property, whilk was to an amount that would have tempted regular soldiers in any service of Europe ; and not only did they restore me my horse, whilk your Excellency knows to be of value ; but I could not prevail on them to accept one stiver, doit, or maravedi, for the trouble and expenses of my sick bed. They actually refused my coined money when freely offered,—a tale seldom to be told in a Christian land."

" I admit," said Montrose, after a moment's reflection, " that their conduct towards you is good evidence of their fidelity ; but how to secure against the breaking out of this feud ?" He paused, and then suddenly added, " I had forgot I have supped, while you Major, have been travelling by moonlight."

He called to his attendants to fetch a stoup of wine and some refreshments. Major Dalgetty, who had the appetite of a convalescent returned from Highland quarters, needed not any pressing to partake of what was set before him, but proceeded to despatch his food with such alacrity, that the Marquis, filling a cup of wine, and drinking to his health, could not help remarking, that, coarse as the provisions of his camp were, he was afraid Major Dal getty had fared much worse during his excursion into Argyleshire.

" Your Excellency may take your corporal oath upon that," said the worthy Major, speaking with his mouth full ; " for Argyle's bread and water are yet stale and mouldy in my recollection, and though they did their best, yet the viands that the Children of the Mist procured for me, poor helpless creatures as they were, were so unrefreshful to my body, that, when inclosed in my armour,

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whilk I was fain to leave behind me for expedition sake I rattled therein like the shrivelled kernel in a nut that hath been kept on to a second Hallowe'en."

"You must take the due means to repair these losses, Major Dalgetty."

"In troth," answered the soldier, "I shall hardly be able to compass that, unless my arrears are to be exchanged for present pay; for I protest to your Excellency, that the three stone weight which I have lost were simply raised upon the regular accountings of the States of Holland."

"In that case," said the Marquis, "you are only reduced to good marching order. As for the pay, let us once have victory—victory, Major, and your wishes, and all our wishes, shall be amply fulfilled. Meantime help yourself to another cup of wine."

"To your Excellency's health," said the Major, filling a cup to the brim, to show the zeal with which he drank the toast, "and victory over all our enemies, and particularly over Argyle! I hope to twitch another handful from his beard myself—I have had one pluck at it already."

"Very true," answered Montrose; "but to return to these men of the Mist. You understand, Dalgetty, that their presence here, and the purpose for which we employ them, is a secret between you and me?"

Delighted, as Montrose had anticipated, with this mark of his general's confidence, the Major laid his hand upon his nose, and nodded intelligence.

"How many may there be of Ranald's followers?" continued the Marquis.

"They are reduced, so far as I know, to some eight or ten men," answered Major Dalgetty, "and a few women and children."

"Where are they now?" demanded Montrose.

"In a valley, at three miles distance," answered the soldier, "awaiting your Excellency's command: I judged it not fit to bring them to your leaguer without your Excellency's orders."

"You judged very well," said Montrose; "it would be proper that they remain where they are, or seek some

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more distant place of refuge. I will send them money, though it is a scarce article with me at present."

"It is quite unnecessary," said Major Dalgetty; "your Excellency has only to hint that the M'Aulays are going in that direction, and my friends of the Mist will instantly make volt-face, and go to the right about."

"That were scarce courteous," said the Marquis. "Better send them a few dollars to purchase them some cattle for the support of the women and children."

"They know how to come by their cattle at a far cheaper rate," said the Major; "but let it be as your Excellency wills."

"Let Ranald MacEagh," said Montrose, "select one or two of his followers, men whom he can trust, and who are capable of keeping their own secret and ours; these with their chief for scout-master-general, shall serve for our guides. Let them be at my tent to-morrow at day-break, and see, if possible, that they neither guess my purpose, nor hold any communication with each other in private.—This old man, has he any children?"

"They have been killed or hanged," answered the Major, "to the number of a round dozen, as I believe—but he hath left one grand-child, a smart and hopeful youth, whom I have noted to be never without a pebble in his plaid-nook, to fling at whatsoever might come in his way, being a symbol, that, like David, who was accustomed to sling smooth stones taken from the brook, he may afterwards prove an adventurous warrior."

"That boy, Major Dalgetty," said the Marquis, "I will have to attend upon my own person. I presume he will have sense enough to keep his name secret?"

"Your Excellency need not fear that," answered Dalgetty; "these Highland imps, from the moment they chip the shell"——

"Well," interrupted Montrose, "that boy shall be pledge for the fidelity of his parent, and if he prove faithful, the child's preferment shall be his reward.—And now, Major Dalgetty, I will license your departure for the night; to-morrow you will introduce this MacEagh, under any name or character he may please to assume. I presume his

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profession has rendered him sufficiently expert in all sort of disguises; or we may admit John of Moidart into our schemes, who has sense, practicability, and intelligence, and will probably allow this man for a time to be disguised as one of his followers. For you, Major, my groom of the chambers will be your quarter-master for this evening."

Major Dalgetty took his leave with a joyful heart, greatly elated with the reception he had met with, and much pleased with the personal manners of his new general, which, as he explained at great length to Ranald MacEagh, reminded him in many respects of the demeanour of the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and Bulwark of the Protestant Faith.

CHAPTER XVII.

The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eyes suspended wait;
Stern famine guards the solitary coast,
And winter barricades the realms of frost.
He comes,—nor want, nor cold, his course delay.

Vanity of Human Wishes.

By break of day Montrose received in his cabin old MacEagh, and questioned him long and particularly as to the means of approaching the country of Argyle. He made a note of his answers, which he compared with those of two of his followers, whom he introduced as the most prudent and experienced. He found them to correspond in all respects; but, still unsatisfied where precaution was so necessary, the Marquis compared the information he had received with that he was able to collect from the Chiefs who lay most near to the destined scene of invasion; and being in all respects satisfied of its accuracy, he resolved to proceed in full reliance upon it.

In one point Montrose changed his mind. Having judged it unfit to take the boy Kenneth into his own service,

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lest, in case of his birth being discovered, it should be resented as an offence by the numerous clans who entertained a feudal enmity to this devoted family, he requested the Major to take him in attendance upon himself; and as he accompanied this request with a handsome *douceur*, under pretence of clothing and equipping the lad, this change was agreeable to all parties.

It was about breakfast-time, when Major Dalgetty, being dismissed by Montrose, went in quest of his old acquaintances, Lord Menteith and the M'Aulays, to whom he longed to communicate his own adventures, as well as to learn from them the particulars of the campaign. It may be imagined he was received with great glee by men to whom the late uniformity of their military life had rendered any change of society an interesting novelty. Allan M'Aulay alone seemed to recoil from his former acquaintance, although, when challenged by his brother, he could render no other reason than a reluctance to be familiar with one who had been so lately in the company of Argyle, and other enemies. Major Dalgetty was a little alarmed by this sort of instinctive consciousness which Allan seemed to entertain respecting the society he had been lately keeping; he was soon satisfied, however, that the perceptions of the seer in this particular were not infallible.

As Ranald MacEagh was to be placed under Major Dalgetty's protection and superintendence, it was necessary he should present him to those persons with whom he was most likely to associate. The dress of the old man had, in the meantime, been changed from the tartan of his clan to a sort of clothing peculiar to the men of the distant Isles, resembling a waistcoat with sleeves, and a petticoat, all made in one piece. This dress was laced from top to bottom in front, and bore some resemblance to that called Polonaise, still worn by children in Scotland of the lower rank. The tartan hose and bonnet completed the dress, which old men of the last century remembered well to have seen worn by the distant Islesmen who came to the Earl of Mar's standard in the year 1715.

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Major Dalgetty, keeping his eye on Allan as he spoke, introduced Ranald MacEagh under the fictitious name of Ranald MacGillihuron in Benbecula, who had escaped with him out of Argyle's prison. He recommended him as a person skilful in the arts of the harper and the senachie, and by no means contemptible in the quality of a second-sighted person or seer. While making this exposition, Major Dalgetty stammered and hesitated in a way so unlike the usual glib forwardness of his manner, that he could not have failed to have given suspicion to Allan M'Aulay, had not that person's whole attention been engaged in steadily perusing the features of the person thus introduced to him. This steady gaze so much embarrassed Ranald MacEagh, that his hand was beginning to sink down towards his dagger, in expectation of a hostile assault, when Allan M'Aulay, suddenly crossing the floor of the hut, extended his hand to him in the way of friendly greeting. They sat down side by side, and conversed in a low mysterious tone of voice. Menteith and Angus M'Aulay were not surprised at this, for there prevailed among the Highlanders who pretended to the second-sight, a sort of free-masonry, which generally induced them, upon meeting, to hold communication with each other on the nature and extent of their visionary experiences.

"Does the sight come gloomy upon your spirit?" said Allan to his new acquaintance.

"As dark as the shadow upon the moon," replied Ranald, "when she is darkened in her mid-course in heaven, and prophets foretell of evil times."

"Come hither," said Allan, "come more this way—I would converse with you apart; for men say that in your distant islands the sight is poured forth with more clearness and power than upon us, who dwell near the Sassenach."

While they were plunged into their mystic conference, the two English cavaliers entered the cabin in the highest possible spirits, and announced to Angus M'Aulay that orders had been issued that all should hold themselves in

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readiness for an immediate march to the westward. Having delivered themselves of their news with much glee, they paid their compliments to their old acquaintance, Major Dalgetty, whom they instantly recognized, and inquired after the health of his charger, Gustavus.

"I humbly thank you, gentlemen," answered the soldier, "Gustavus is well, though, like his master, somewhat barer on the ribs than when you offered to relieve me of him at Darnlinvarach; and let me assure you, that before you have made one or two of those marches which you seem to contemplate with so much satisfaction in prospect, you will leave, my good Knights, some of your English beef, and probably an English horse or two, behind you."

Both exclaimed that they cared very little what they found or what they left, provided the scene changed from dogging up and down Angus and Aberdeenshire, in pursuit of an enemy who would neither fight nor run away.

"If such be the case," said Angus M'Aulay, "I must give orders to my followers, and make provision too for the safe conveyance of Annot Lyle; for an advance into MacCallum More's country will be a farther and fouler road than these pinks of Cumbrian Knighthood are aware of." So saying, he left the cabin.

"Annot Lyle!" repeated Dalgetty, "is she following the campaign?"

"Surely," replied Sir Giles Musgrave, his eye glancing slightly from Lord Menteith to Allan M'Aulay; "we could neither march nor fight, advance nor retreat, without the influence of the Princess of Harps."

"The Princess of Broad-swords and Targets, I say," answered his companion; "for the Lady of Montrose herself could not be more courteously waited upon; she has four Highland maidens, and as many bare-legged gillies, to wait upon her orders."

"And what would you have, gentlemen?" said Allan, turning suddenly from the Highlander with whom he was in conversation; "would you yourselves have left an innocent female, the companion of your infancy, to die by

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violence, or perish by famine? There is not, by this time, a roof upon the habitation of my fathers—our crops have been destroyed, and our cattle have been driven—and you, gentlemen, have to bless God, that, coming from a milder and more civilized country, you expose only your own lives in this remorseless war, without apprehension that your enemies will visit with their vengeance the defenceless pledges you may have left behind you."

The Englishmen cordially agreed that they had the superiority in this respect; and the company, now dispersing, went each to his several charge or occupation.

Allan lingered a moment behind, still questioning the reluctant Ranald MacEagh upon a point in his supposed visions, by which he was greatly perplexed. "Repeatedly," he said, "have I had the sight of a Gael, who seemed to plunge his weapon into the body of Menteith, —of that young nobleman in the scarlet laced cloak, who has just now left the bothy. But by no effort, though I have gazed till my eyes were almost fixed in the sockets, can I discover the face of this Highlander, or even conjecture who he may be, although his person and air seem familar to me."[15]

"Have you reversed you own plaid," said Ranald, "according to the rule of the experienced Seers in such case?"

"I have," answered Allan, speaking low, and shudder ing, as if with internal agony.

"And in what guise did the phantom then appear to you?" said Ranald.

"With his plaid also reversed," answered Allan, in the same low and convulsed tone.

"Then be assured," said Ranald, "that your own hand, and none other, will do the deed of which you have witnessed the shadow."

"So has my anxious soul an hundred times surmised," replied Allan. "But it is impossible! Were I to read the record in the eternal book of fate, I would declare it impossible—we are bound by the ties of blood, and by a hundred ties more intimate—we have stood side by side in

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battle, and our swords have reeked with the blood of the same enemies—it is IMPOSSIBLE I should harm him!"

"That you WILL do so," answered Ranald, "is certain, though the cause be hid in the darkness of futurity. You say," he continued, suppressing his own emotions with difficulty, "that side by side you have pursued your prey like bloodhounds—have you never seen bloodhounds turn their fangs against each other, and fight over the body of a throttled deer?"

"It is false!" said M'Aulay, starting up; "these are not the forebodings of fate, but the temptation of some evil spirit from the bottomless pit!" So saying, he strode out of the cabin.

"Thou hast it!" said the Son of the Mist, looking after him with an air of exultation; "the barbed arrow is in thy side! Spirits of the slaughtered, rejoice! soon shall your murderers' swords be dyed in each others' blood."

On the succeeding morning all was prepared, and Montrose advanced by rapid marches up the river Tay, and poured his desultory forces into the romantic vale around the lake of the same name, which lies at the head of that river. The inhabitants were Campbells, not indeed the vassals of Argyle, but of the allied and kindred house of Glenorchy, which now bears the name of Breadalbane. Being taken by surprise, they were totally unprepared for resistance, and were compelled to be passive witnesses of the ravages which took place among their flocks and herds. Advancing in this manner to the vale of Loch Dochart, and laying waste the country around him, Montrose reached the most difficult point of his enterprize.

To a modern army, even with the assistance of the good military road which now leads up by Teinedrum to the head of Loch Awe, the passage of these extensive wilds would seem a task of some difficulty. But at this period, and for long afterwards, there was no road or path whatsoever; and, to add to the difficulty, the mountains were already covered with snow. It was a sublime scene to look up to them, piled in great masses, one upon anoth-

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er, the front rank of dazzling whiteness, while those which arose behind them caught a rosy tint from the setting of a clear wintry sun. Ben Cruachan, superior in magnitude, and seeming the very citadel of the Genius of the Region, rose high above the others, showing his glimmering and scathed peak to the distance of many miles.

The followers of Montrose were men not to be daunted by the sublime, yet terrible prospect before them. Many of them were of that ancient race of Highlanders, who not only willingly made their couch in the snow, but considered it as effeminate luxury to use a snow-ball for a pillow. Plunder and revenge lay beyond the frozen mountains which they beheld, and they did not permit themselves to be daunted by the difficulty of traversing them. Montrose did not allow their spirits time to subside. He ordered the pipes to play in the van the ancient pibroch, entitled "*Hoggal nam bo*," &c. (that is, We come through snow-drift to drive the prey;) the shrilling sounds of which had often struck the vales of the Lennox with terror.* The troops advanced with the nimble alacrity of mountaineers, and were soon involved in the dangerous pass, through which Ranald acted as their guide, going before them with a select party, to track out the way.

The power of man at no time appears more contemptible, than when it is placed in contrast with scenes of natural terror and dignity. The victorious army of Montrose, whose exploits had struck terror into all Scotland, when ascending up this terrific pass, seemed a contemptible handful of stragglers, in the act of being devoured by the jaws of the mountain, which appeared ready to close upon them. Even Montrose half repented the boldness of his attempt, as he looked down from the summit of the first eminence which he attained, upon the scattered condition of his small army. The difficulty of getting forward was so great, that considerable gaps began to occur in the line of march, and the distance between the van, centre, and

* It is the family-march of the M'Farlanes, a warlike and predatory clan, who inhabited the western banks of Loch-Lomond. See Note 1, Waverley vol II.

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rear, was each moment increased in a degree equally incommodious and dangerous. It was with great apprehension that Montrose looked upon every point of advantage which the hill afforded, in dread it might be found occupied by an enemy prepared for defence; and he often afterwards was heard to express his conviction, that had the passes of Strath-Fillan been defended by two hundred resolute men, not only would his progress have been effectually stopt, but his army must have been in danger of being totally cut off. Security, however, the bane of many a strong country, and many a fortress, betrayed, on this occasion, the district of Argyle to his enemies. The invaders had only to contend with the natural difficulties of the path, and with the snow, which, fortunately, had not fallen in any great quantity. The army no sooner reached the summit of the ridge of hills dividing Argyleshire from the district of Breadalbane, than they rushed down upon the devoted vales beneath them with a fury sufficiently expressive of the motives which had dictated a movement so difficult and hazardous.

Montrose divided his army into three bodies, in order to produce a wider and more extensive terror, one of which was commanded by the Captain of Clan Ranald, one intrusted to the leading of Colkitto, and the third remained under his own direction. He was thus enabled to penetrate the country of Argyle at three different points. Resistance there was none. The flight of the shepherds from the hills had first announced in the peopled districts this formidable irruption, and wherever the clansmen were summoned out, they were killed, disarmed, and dispersed, by an enemy who had anticipated their motions. Major Dalgetty, who had been sent forward against Inverary with the few horse of the army that were fit for service, managed his matters so well, that he had very nearly surprised Argyle, as he expressed it, *inter pocula;* and it was only a rapid flight by water which saved that chief from death or captivity. But the punishment which Argyle himself escaped fell heavily upon his country and clan, and the ravages committed by Montrose on that devoted land, although

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too consistent with the genius of the country and times, have been repeatedly and justly quoted as a blot on his actions and character.

Argyle, in the meantime, had fled to Edinburgh, to lay his complaints before the Convention of Estates. To meet the exigence of the moment, a considerable army was raised under General Baillie, a Presbyterian officer of skill and fidelity, with whom was joined in command the celebrated Sir John Urrie, a soldier of fortune like Dalgetty, who had already changed sides twice during the Civil War, and was destined to turn his coat a third time before it was ended. Argyle also, burning with indignation, proceeded to levy his own numerous forces, in order to avenge himself of his feudal enemy. He established his head-quarters at Dunbarton, where he was soon joined by a considerable force, consisting chiefly of his own clansmen and dependents. Being there joined by Baillie and Urrie, with a very considerable army of regular forces, he prepared to march into Argyleshire, and chastise the invader of his paternal territories.

But Montrose, while these two formidable armies were forming a junction, had been recalled from that ravaged country by the approach of a third, collected in the north under the Earl of Seaforth, who, after some hesitation, having embraced the side of the Covenanters, had now, with the assistance of the veteran garrison of Inverness, formed a considerable army, with which he threatened Montrose from Inverness-shire. Inclosed in a wasted and unfriendly country, and menaced on each side by advancing enemies of superior force, it might have been supposed that Montrose's destruction was certain. But these were precisely the circumstances under which the active and enterprizing genius of the Great Marquis was calculated to excite the wonder and admiration of his friends, the astonishment and terror of his enemies. As if by magic, he collected his scattered forces from the wasteful occupation in which they had been engaged; and scarce were they again united, ere Argyle and his associate generals were informed, that the royalists having suddenly disappeared from Argyleshire, had retreated north-

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wards among the dusky and impenetrable mountains of Lochaber.

The sagacity of the generals opposed to Montrose, immediately conjectured, that it was the purpose of their active antagonist to fight with, and, if possible, to destroy Seaforth, ere they could come to his assistance. This occasioned a corresponding change in their operations. Leaving this chieftain to make the best defence he could, Urrie and Baillie again separated their forces from those of Argyle, and having chiefly horse and Lowland troops under their command, they kept the southern side of the Grampian ridge, moving along eastward into the county of Angus, resolving from thence to proceed into Aberdeenshire, in order to intercept Montrose, if he should attempt to escape in that direction.

Argyle, with his own levies and other troops, undertook to follow Montrose's march; so that in case he should come to action either with Seaforth, or with Baillie and Urrie, he might be placed between two fires by this third army, which, at a secure distance, was to hang upon his rear.

For this purpose Argyle once more moved towards Inverary, having an opportunity, at every step, to deplore the severities which the hostile clans had exercised on his dependants and country. Whatever noble qualities the Highlanders possessed, and they had many, clemency in treating a hostile country was not of the number; but even the ravages of hostile troops combined to swell the number of Argyle's followers. It is still a Highland proverb, He whose house is burnt must become a soldier; and hundreds of the inhabitants of these unfortunate valleys had now no means of maintenance, save by exercising upon others the severities they had themselves sustained, and no future prospect of happiness, excepting in the gratification of revenge. His bands were therefore augmented by the very circumstances which had desolated his country, and Argyle soon found himself at the head of three thousand determined men, distinguished for activity and courage, and commanded by gentlemen of his own

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name, who yielded to none in those qualities. Under himself, he conferred the principal command upon Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, and another Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchenbreck,[16] an experienced and veteran soldier, whom he had recalled from the wars of Ireland for this purpose. The cold spirit of Argyle himself, however, clogged the military councils of his more intrepid assistants; and it was resolved, notwithstanding their increased force, to observe the same plan of operations, and to follow Montrose cautiously, in whatever direction he should march, avoiding an engagement until an opportunity should occur of falling upon his rear, while he should be engaged with another enemy in front.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Piobrachet au Donuil-dhu,
Piobrachet au Donuil,
Piobrachet agus S'breittach
Feacht an Innerlochy.

The war-tune of Donald the Black,
The war-tune of Black Donald,
The pipes and the banner
Are up in the rendezvous of Inverlochy.

THE military road connecting the chain of forts, as it is called, and running in the general line of the present Caledonian canal, has now completely opened the great glen, or chasm, extending almost across the whole island, once doubtless filled by the sea, and still affording basins for that long line of lakes, by means of which modern art has united the German and Atlantic Oceans. The paths or tracks by which the natives traversed this extensive valley, were, in 1645–6, in the same situation as when they awaked the strain of an Irish engineer officer, who had

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been employed in converting them into practicable military roads, and whose eulogium begins, and, for aught I know, ends, as follows:

> "Had you seen but these roads before they were made,
> You would have held up your hands and blessed General Wade."

But, bad as the ordinary paths were, Montrose avoided them, and led his army, like a herd of wild-deer, from mountain to mountain, and from forest to forest, where his enemies could learn nothing of his motions, while he acquired the most perfect knowledge respecting theirs, from the friendly clans of Cameron and M'Donnell, whose mountainous districts he now traversed. Strict orders had been given that Argyle's advance should be watched, and that all intelligence respecting his motions should be communicated instantly to the General himself.

It was a moonlight night, and Montrose, worn out by the fatigues of the day, was laid down to sleep in a miserable shieling. He had only slumbered two hours, when some one touched his shoulder. He looked up, and, by the stately form and deep voice, easily recognized the Chief of the Camerons.

"I have news for you," said that leader, "which is worth while to arise and listen to."

"M'Ilduy[17] can bring no other," said Montrose, addressing the Chief by his patronymic title—"are they good or bad?"

"As you may take them," said the Chieftain.

"Are they certain?" demanded Montrose.

"Yes," answered M'Ilduy, "or another messenger should have brought them. Know that, tired with the task imposed upon me of accompanying that unhappy Dalgetty and his handful of horse, who detained me for hours on the march at the pace of a crippled badger, I made a stretch of four miles with six of my people, in the direction of Inverlochy, and there met with Ian of Glenroy, who had been out for intelligence. Argyle is moving upon Inverlochy with three thousand chosen men, commanded by the flower of the sons of Diarmid.—These

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are my news—they are certain—it is for you to construe their purport."

"Their purport must be good," answered Montrose, readily and cheerfully; "the voice of M'Ilduy is ever pleasant in the ears of Montrose, and most pleasant when it speaks of some brave enterprize at hand—What are our musters?"

He then called for light, and easily ascertained that a great part of his followers having, as usual, dispersed to secure their booty, he had not with him above twelve or fourteen hundred men.

"Not much above a third," said Montrose, pausing, "of Argyle's force, and Highlanders opposed to Highlanders.—With the blessing of God upon the royal cause, I would not hesitate were the odds but one to two."

"Then do not hesitate," said Cameron; "for, when your trumpets shall sound to attack MacCallum More, not a man of these glens will remain deaf to the summons. Glengarry—Keppoch—I myself—would destroy, with fire and sword, the wretch who should remain behind under any pretence whatsoever. To-morrow, or the next day, shall be a day of battle to all who bear the name of M'Donnell or Cameron, whatever be the event."

"It is gallantly said, my noble friend," said Montrose, grasping his hand, "and I were worse than a coward did I not do justice to such followers, by entertaining the most indubitable hopes of success. We will turn back on this MacCallum More, who follows us like a raven to devour the relics of our army, should we meet braver men who may be able to break its strength! Let the Chiefs and leaders be called together as quickly as possible; and you, who have brought us the first news of this joyful event,—for such it shall be,—you, M'Ilduy, shall bring it to a joyful issue, by guiding us the best and nearest road against our enemy."

"That will I willingly do," said M'Ilduy; "if I have shown you paths by which to retreat through these dusky wilds, with far more readiness will I teach you how to advance against your foe."

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A general bustle now prevailed, and the leaders were every where startled from the rude couches on which they had sought temporary repose.

"I never thought," said Major Dalgetty, when summoned up from a handful of rugged heather roots, "to have parted from a bed as hard as a stable-broom with such bad will; but indubitably, having but one man of military experience in his army, his Excellency the Marquis may be vindicated in putting him upon hard duty."

So saying, he repaired to the council, where, notwithstanding his pedantry, Montrose seemed always to listen to him with considerable attention; partly because the Major really possessed military knowledge and experience, and often made suggestions which were found of advantage, and partly because it relieved the General from the necessity of deferring entirely to the opinion of the Highland Chiefs, and gave him additional ground for disputing it when it was not agreeable to his own. On the present occasion, Dalgetty joyfully acquiesced in the proposal of marching back and confronting Argyle, which he compared to the valiant resolution of the great Gustavus, who moved against the Duke of Bavaria, and enriched his troops by the plunder of that fertile country, although menaced from the northward by the large army which Wallenstein had assembled in Bohemia.

The Chiefs of Glengarry, Keppoch, and Lochiel, whose clans, equal in courage and military fame to any in the Highlands, lay within the neighbourhood of the scene of action, despatched the fiery cross through their vassals, to summon every one who could bear arms to meet the King's Lieutenant, and to join the standards of their respective Chiefs as they marched towards Inverlochy. As the order was emphatically given, it was speedily and willingly obeyed. Their natural love of war, their zeal for the royal cause,—for they viewed the King in the light of a chief whom his clansmen had deserted,—as well as their implicit obedience to their own patriarch, drew in to Montrose's army not only all in the neighbourhood who were able to bear arms, but some who, in age at least,

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might have been esteemed past the use of them. During the next day's march, which, being directed straight through the mountains of Lochaber, was unsuspected by the enemy, his forces were augmented by handfuls of men issuing from each glen, and ranging themselves under the banners of their respective Chiefs. This was a circumstance highly inspiriting to the rest of the army, who, by the time they approached the enemy, found their strength increased considerably more than one-fourth, as had been prophesied by the valiant leader of the Camerons.

While Montrose executed this counter-march, Argyle had, at the head of his gallant army, advanced up the southern side of Loch-Eil, and reached the river Lochy, which combines that lake with Loch-Lochy. The ancient Castle of Inverlochy, once, as it is said, a royal fortress, and still, although dismantled, a place of some strength and consideration, offered convenient head-quarters, and there was ample room for Argyle's army to encamp around him in the valley, where the Lochy joins Loch-Eil. Several barges had attended, loaded with provisions, so that they were in every respect as well accommodated as such an army wished or expected to be. Argyle, in council with Auchenbreck and Ardenvohr, expressed his full confidence that Montrose was now on the brink of destruction.; that his troops must gradually diminish as he moved eastward through such uncouth paths ; that if he went eastward, he must encounter Urrie and Baillie ; if northward, fall into the hands of Seaforth ; or should he choose any halting-place, he would expose himself to be attacked by three armies at once.

" I cannot rejoice in the prospect, my lord," said Auchenbreck, " that James Grahame will be crushed with little assistance of ours. He has left a heavy account in Argyleshire against him, and I long to reckon with him drop of blood for drop of blood. I love not the payment of such debts by third hands."

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"You are too scrupulous," said Argyle; "what signifies it by whose hands the blood of the Grahames is spilt? It is time that of the sons of Diarmid should cease to flow. —What say you, Ardenvohr?"

"I say, my lord," replied Sir Duncan, "that I think Auchenbreck will be gratified, and will himself have a personal opportunity of settling accounts with Montrose for his depredations. Reports have reached our outposts that the Camerons are assembling their full strength on the skirts of Ben-Nevis; this must be to join the advance of Montrose, and not to cover his retreat."

"It must be some scheme of harassing and depredation," said Argyle, "devised by the inveterate malignity of M'Ilduy, which he terms loyalty. They can intend no more than an attack on our outposts, or some annoyance to to-morrow's march."

"I have sent out scouts," said Sir Duncan, "in every direction, to procure intelligence; and we must soon hear whether they really do assemble any force, upon what point, or with what purpose."

It was late ere any tidings were received; but when the moon had arisen, a considerable bustle in the camp, and a noise immediately after heard in the castle, announced the arrival of important intelligence. Of the scouts first dispersed by Ardenvohr, some had returned without being able to collect anything, save uncertain rumours concerning movements in the country of the Camerons. It seemed as if the skirts of Ben-Nevis were sending forth those unaccountable and portentous sounds with which they sometimes announce the near approach of a storm. Others, whose zeal carried them further upon their mission, were entrapped and slain, or made prisoners, by the inhabitants of the fastnesses into which they endeavoured to penetrate. At length, on the rapid advance of Montrose's army, his advanced guard and the outposts of Argyle became aware of each other's presence, and after exchanging a few musket-shots and arrows, fell back to their respective main bodies, to convey intelligence and receive orders.

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Sir Duncan Campbell, and Auchenbreck, instantly threw themselves on horseback, in order to visit the state of the outposts; and the Marquis of Argyle maintained nis character of commander-in-chief with reputation, by making a respectable arrangement of his forces in the plain, as it was evident that they might now expect a night alarm, or an attack in the morning at farthest. Montrose had kept his forces so cautiously within the defiles of the mountain, that no effort which Auchenbreck or Ardenvohr thought it prudent to attempt, could ascertain his probable strength. They were aware, however, that, at the utmost computation, it must be inferior to their own, and they returned to Argyle to inform him of the amount of their observations; but that nobleman refused to believe that Montrose could be in presence himself. He said, "It was a madness of which even James Grahame, in his height of presumptuous frenzy, was incapable; and he doubted not that their march was only impeded by their ancient enemies, Glenco, Keppoch, and Glenglarry; and perhaps M'Vourigh, with his M'Phersons, might have assembled a force, which he knew must be greatly inferior in numbers to his own, and whom, therefore, he doubted not to disperse by force, or by terms of capitulation."

The spirit of Argyle's followers was high, breathing vengeance for the disasters which their country had so lately undergone; and the night passed in anxious hopes that the morning might dawn on their vengeance. The outposts of either army kept a careful watch, and the soldiers of Argyle slept in the order of battle which they were next day to occupy.

A pale dawn had scarce begun to tinge the tops of these immense mountains, when the leaders of both armies prepared for the business of the day. It was the second of February, 1645–6. The clansmen of Argyle were arranged in two lines, not far from the angle between the river and the lake, and made an appearance equally resolute and formidable. Auchenbreck would willingly have commenced the battle by an attack on the

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outposts of the enemy, but Argyle, with more cautious policy, preferred receiving to making the onset. Signals were soon heard, that they would not long wait for it in vain. The Campbells could distinguish, in the gorge of the mountains, the war-tunes of various clans as they advanced to the onset. That of the Camerons, which bears the ominous words, addressed to the wolves and ravens, "Come to me, and I will give you flesh," was loudly re-echoed from their native glens. In the language of the Highland bards, the war voice of Glengarry was not silent; and the gathering tunes of other tribes could be plainly distinguished, as they successively came up to the extremity of the passes from which they were to descend into the plain."

"You see," said Argyle to his kinsmen, "it is as I said, we have only to deal with our neighbours—James Grahame has not ventured to show us his banner."

At this moment there resounded from the gorge of the pass a lively flourish of trumpets, in that note with which it was the ancient Scottish fashion to salute the royal standard.

"You may hear, my lord, from yonder signal," said Sir Duncan Campbell, "that he who pretends to be the King's Lieutenant must be in person among these men."

"And has probably horse with him," said Auchenbreck, "which I could not have anticipated. But shall we look pale for that, my lord, when we have foes to fight, and wrongs to revenge?"

Argyle was silent, and looked upon his arm, which hung in a sash, owing to a fall which he had sustained in a preceding march.

"It is true," interrupted Ardenvohr, eagerly; "my Lord of Argyle, you are disabled from using either sword or pistol; you must retire on board the galleys—your life is precious to us as a head—your hand cannot be useful to us as a soldier."

"No," said Argyle, pride contending with irresolution, "it shall never be said that I fled before Montrose; if I cannot fight, I will at least die in the midst of my children."

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Several other principal Chiefs of the Campbells, with one voice, conjured and obtested their Chieftain to leave them for that day to the leading of Ardenvohr and Auchenbreck, and to behold the conflict from a distance and in safety.—We dare not stigmatize Argyle with poltroonery; for, though his life was marked by no action of bravery, yet he behaved with so much composure and dignity in the final and closing scene, that his conduct upon the present and similar occasions, should be rather imputed to indecision than to want of courage. But when the small still voice within a man's own breast, which tells him that his life is of consequence to himself, is seconded by that of numbers around him, who assure him that it is of equal advantage to the public, history affords many examples of men more habitually daring than Argyle, who have consulted self-preservation, when the temptations to it were so powerfully increased.

"See him on board, if you will, Sir Duncan," said Auchenbreck to his kinsman; "it must be my duty to prevent this spirit from spreading farther among us."

So saying, he threw himself among the ranks, entreating, commanding, and conjuring the soldiers, to remember their ancient fame and their present superiority; the wrongs they had to revenge, if successful, and the fate they had to dread, if vanquished; and imparting to every bosom a portion of the fire which glowed in his own. Slowly, meanwhile, and apparently with reluctance, Argyle suffered himself to be forced by his officious kinsmen to the verge of the lake, and was transported on board of a galley, from the deck of which he surveyed with more safety than credit the scene which ensued.

Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, notwithstanding the urgency of the occasion, stood with his eyes rivetted on the boat which bore his Chieftain from the field of battle. There were feelings in his bosom which could not be expressed; for the character of a Chief was that of a father, and the heart of a clansman durst not dwell upon his failings with critical severity, as upon those of other men. Argyle, too, harsh and severe to others, was

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generous and liberal among his kinsmen, and the noble heart of Ardenvohr was wrung with bitter anguish, when he reflected to what interpretation his present conduct might subject him.

"It is better it should be so," said he to himself, devouring his own emotion; "but——of his line of a hundred sires, I know not one who would have retired while the banner of Diarmid waved in the wind in the face of its most inveterate foes!"

"A loud shout now compelled him to turn and to hasten with all despatch to his post, which was on the right flank of Argyle's little army.

The retreat of Argyle had not passed unobserved by his watchful enemy, who occupying the superior ground, could mark every circumstance which passed below. The movement of three or four horsemen to the rear showed that those who retreated were men of rank.

"They are going," said Dalgetty, "to put their horses out of danger, like prudent cavaliers. Yonder goes Sir Duncan Campbell, riding a brown bay gelding, which I had marked for my own second charger."

"You are wrong, Major," said Montrose, with a bitter smile, "they are saving their precious Chief.—Give the signal for assault instantly—send the word through the ranks.—Gentlemen, noble Chiefs, Glengarry, Keppoch, M'Vourigh, upon them instantly!—Ride to M'Ilduy, Major Dalgetty, and tell him to charge, as he loves Lochaber—return and bring our handful of horse to my standard. They shall be placed with the Irish as a reserve.

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CHAPTER XIX.

As meets a rock a thousand waves, so Inisfail met Lochlin.
Ossian.

The trumpets and bagpipes, those clamorous harbingers of blood and death, at once united in the signal for onset, which was replied to by the cry of more than two thousand warriors, and the echoes of the mountain glens behind them. Divided into three bodies, or columns the Highland followers of Montrose poured from the defiles which had hitherto concealed them from their enemies, and rushed with the utmost determination upon the Campbells, who waited their charge with the greatest firmness. Behind these charging columns marched in line the Irish, under Colkitto, intended to form the reserve. With them was the royal standard, and Montrose himself; and on the flanks were about fifty horse, under Dalgetty, which, by wonderful exertions, had been kept in some sort fit for service.

The right column of Royalists was led by Glengarry, the left by Lochiel, and the centre by the Earl of Menteith, who preferred fighting on foot in a Highland dress to remaining with the cavalry.

The Highlanders poured on with the proverbial fury of their country, firing their guns, and discharging their arrows, at a little distance from the enemy, who received the assault with the most determined gallantry. Better provided with musketry than their enemies, stationary also, and therefore taking the more decisive aim, the fire of Argyle's followers was more destructive than that which they sustained. The royal clans, perceiving this, rushed to close quarters, and succeeded on two points in throwing their enemies into disorder. With regular troops this must have achieved a victory; but here Highlanders were opposed to Highlanders, and the nature of the weapons,

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as well as the agility of those who wielded them, was equal on both sides.

Their strife was accordingly desperate; and the clash of the swords and axes, as they encountered each other, or rung upon the targets, was mingled with the short, wild, animating shrieks with which Highlanders accompany the battle, the dance, or indeed violent exertion of any kind. Many of the foes opposed were personally acquainted, and sought to match themselves with each other from motives of hatred, or a more generous emulation of valour. Neither party would retreat an inch, while the place of those who fell (and they fell fast on both sides) was eagerly supplied by others, who thronged to the front of danger. A steam, like that which arises from a seething cauldron, rose into the thin, cold, frosty air, and hovered above the combatants.

So stood the fight on the right and the centre, with no immediate consequence, except mutual wounds and death.

On the right of the Campbells, the Knight of Ardenvohr obtained some advantage, through his military skill, and by strength of numbers. He had moved forward obliquely the extreme flank of his line at the instant the Royalists were about to close, so that they sustained a fire at once on front and in flank, and, despite the utmost efforts of their leader, were thrown into some confusion. At this instant, Sir Duncan Campbell gave the word to charge, and thus unexpectedly made the attack at the very moment he seemed about to receive it. Such a change of circumstances is always discouraging, and often fatal. But the disorder was remedied by the advance of the Irish reserve, whose heavy and sustained fire compelled the Knight of Ardenvohr to forego his advantage, and content himself with repulsing the enemy. The Marquis of Montrose, in the meanwhile, availing himself of some scattered birch trees, as well as of the smoke produced by the close fire of the Irish musketry, which concealed the operation, called upon Dalgetty to follow him with the horse, and wheeling round, so as to gain the right flank and even the rear of the enemy, he commanded his six trumpets to sound the charge. The clang of the cavalry

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trumpets, and the noise of the galloping of the horse, produced an effect upon Argyle's right wing which no other sounds could have impressed them with. The mountaineers of that period had a superstitious dread of the war-horse, like that entertained by the Peruvians, and had many strange ideas respecting the manner in which that animal was trained to combat. When, therefore, they found their ranks unexpectedly broken, and that the objects of their greatest terror were suddenly in the midst of them, the panic, in spite of Sir Duncan's attempts to stop it, became universal. Indeed, the figure of Major Dalgetty alone, sheathed in impenetrable armour, and making his horse caracole and bound, so as to give weight to every blow which he struck, would have been a novelty in itself sufficient to terrify those who had never seen anything more nearly resembling such a cavalier, than a *shelty* waddling under a Highlander far bigger than itself. The repulsed Royalists returned to the charge; the Irish, keeping their ranks, maintained a fire equally close and destructive. There was no sustaining the fight longer. Argyle's followers began to break and fly, most towards the lake, the remainder in different directions. The defeat of the right wing, of itself decisive, was rendered irreparable by the death of Auchenbreck, who fell while endeavouring to restore order.

The Knight of Ardenvohr, with two or three hundred men, all gentlemen of descent and distinguished gallantry,—for the Campbells are supposed to have had more gentlemen in their ranks than any of the Highland clans,—endeavoured, with unavailing heroism, to cover the tumultuary retreat of the common file. Their resolution only proved fatal to themselves, as they were charged again and again by fresh adversaries, and forced to separate from each other, until at length their aim seemed only to be to purchase an honourable death by resisting to the very last.

"Good quarter, Sir Duncan," called out Major Dalgetty, when he discovered his late host, with one or two others, defending himself against several Highlanders; and, to enforce his offer, he rode up to him with his

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sword uplifted. Sir Duncan's reply was the discharge of a reserved pistol, which took effect not on the person of the rider, but on that of his gallant horse, which, shot through the heart, fell dead under him. Ranald MacEagh, who was one of those who had been pressing Sir Duncan hard, took the opportunity to cut him down with his broad-sword, as he turned from him in the act of firing the pistol.

Allan M'Aulay came up at this moment. They were, excepting Ranald, followers of his brother who were engaged on that part of the field. "Villains!" he said, "which of you has dared to do this, when it was my positive order that the Knight of Ardenvohr should be taken alive?"

Half-a-dozen of busy hands, which were emulously employed in plundering the fallen knight, whose arms and accoutrements were of a magnificence befitting his quality, instantly forebore the occupation, and half the number of voices exculpated themselves, by laying the blame on the Skye-man, as they called Ranald MacEagh.

"Dog of an Islander!" said Allan, forgetting, in his wrath, their prophetic brotherhood, "follow the chase, and harm him no farther, unless you mean to die by my hand." They were at this moment left almost alone; for Allan's threats had forced his own clan from the spot, and all around had pressed onwards towards the lake, carrying before them noise, terror, and confusion, and leaving behind only the dead and dying. The moment was tempting to MacEagh's vengeful spirit.—"That I should die by your hand, red as it is with the blood of my kindred," said he, answering the threat of Allan in a tone as menacing as his own, "is not more likely than that you should fall by mine." With that, he struck at M'Aulay with such unexpected readiness, that he had scarce time to intercept the blow with his target.

"Villain!" said Allan, in astonishment, "what means this?"

"I am Ranald of the Mist!" answered the Islesman, repeating the blow; and, with that word, they engaged

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in close and furious conflict. It seemed to be decreed, that in Allan M'Aulay had arisen the avenger of his mother's wrongs upon this wild tribe, as was proved by the issue of the present, as well as of former combats. After exchanging a few blows, Ranald MacEagh was prostrated by a deep wound on the skull; and M'Aulay, setting his foot on him, was about to pass the broad-sword through his body, when the point of the weapon was struck up by a third party, who suddenly interposed. This was no other than Major Dalgetty, who, stunned by the fall, and encumbered by the dead body of his horse, had now recovered his legs and his understanding. "Hold up your sword," said he to M'Aulay, "and prejudice this person no farther, in respect that he is here in my safe-conduct, and in his Excellency's service; and in regard that no honourable cavalier is at liberty, by the law martial, to revenge his own private injuries, *flagrante bello, multo majus flagrante prælio.*"

"Fool!" said Allan, "stand aside, and dare not to come between the tiger and his prey!"

But, far from quitting his point, Dalgetty stept across the fallen body of MacEagh, and gave Allan to understand, that if he called himself a tiger, he was likely at present to find a lion in his path. There required no more than the gesture and tone of defiance to turn the whole rage of the military Seer against the person who was opposing the course of his vengeance, and blows were instantly exchanged without farther ceremony.

The strife betwixt Allan and MacEagh had been unnoticed by the stragglers around, for the person of the latter was known to few of Montrose's followers; but the scuffle betwixt Dalgetty and him, both so well known, attracted instant attention; and fortunately, among others, that of Montrose himself, who had come for the purpose of gathering together his small body of horse, and following the pursuit down Loch-Eil. Aware of the fatal consequences of dissension in his little army, he pushed his horse up to the spot, and seeing MacEagh on the ground, and Dalgetty in the attitude of protecting

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him against M'Aulay, his quick apprehension instantly caught the cause of quarrel, and as instantly devised means to stop it. "For shame," he said, "gentlemen cavaliers, brawling together in so glorious a field of victory!—Are you mad? Or are you intoxicated with the glory which you have both this day gained?"

"It is not my fault, so please your Excellency," said Dalgetty. "I have been known a *bonus socius*, a *bon camarado*, in all the services of Europe; but he that touches a man under my safeguard"——

"And he," said Allan, speaking at the same time, "who dares to bar the course of my just vengeance"—

"For shame, gentlemen!" again repeated Montrose; "I have other business for you both,—business of deeper importance than any private quarrel, which you may easily find a more fitting time to settle. For you, Major Dalgetty, kneel down."

"Kneel!" said Dalgetty; "I have not learned to obey that word of command, saving when it is given from the pulpit. In the Swedish discipline, the front-rank do indeed kneel, but only when the regiment is drawn up six file deep."

Nevertheless," repeated Montrose,—"kneel down, in the name of King Charles and of his representative."

When Dalgetty reluctantly obeyed, Montrose struck him lightly on the neck with the flat of his sword, saying,—"In reward of the gallant service of this day, and in the name and authority of our sovereign, King Charles, I dub thee knight; be brave, loyal, and fortunate. And now, Sir Dugald Dalgetty, to your duty. Collect what horsemen you can, and pursue such of the enemy as are flying down the side of the lake. Do not disperse your force, nor venture too far; but take heed to prevent their rallying, which very little exertion may do. Mount, then, Sir Dugald, and do your duty."

"But what shall I mount?" said the new-made chevalier. "Poor Gustavus sleeps in the bed of honour, like his immortal namesake! and I am made a knight, a rider,

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as the High Dutch[18] have it, just when I have not a horse left to ride upon."

"That shall not be said," answered Montrose, dismounting; "I make you a present of my own, which has been thought a good one; only I pray you, resume the duty you discharge so well."

With many acknowledgments, Sir Dugald mounted the steed so liberally bestowed upon him; and only beseeching his Excellency to remember that MacEagh was under his safe-conduct, immediately began to execute the orders assigned to him, with great zeal and alacrity.

"And you, Allan M'Aulay," said Montrose, addressing the Highlander, who, leaning his sword-point on the ground, had regarded the ceremony of his antagonist's knighthood with a sneer of sullen scorn,—"you, who are superior to the ordinary men led by the paltry motives of plunder, and pay, and personal distinction,—you, whose deep knowledge renders you so valuable a counsellor,—is it *you* whom I find striving with a man like Dalgetty, for the privilege of trampling the remains of life out of so contemptible an enemy as lies there? Come, my friend, I have other work for you. This victory, skilfully improved, shall win Seaforth to our party. It is not disloyalty, but despair of the good cause, that has induced him to take arms against us. These arms, in this moment of better augury, he may be brought to unite with ours. I shall send my gallant friend, Colonel Hay, to him, from this very field of battle, but he must be united in commission with a Highland gentleman of rank, befitting that of Seaforth, and of talents and of influence such as may make an impression upon him. You are not only in every respect the fittest for this most important mission, but, having no immediate command, your presence may be more easily spared than that of a Chief whose following is in the field. You know every pass and glen in the Highlands, as well as the manners and customs of every tribe. Go therefore to Hay, on the right wing; he has instructions, and expects you. You

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will find him with Glenmorrison's men; be his guide, his interpreter, and his colleague."

Allan M'Aulay bent on the Marquis a dark and penetrating glance, as if to ascertain whether this sudden mission was not conferred for some latent and unexplained purpose. But Montrose, skilful in searching the motives of others, was an equal adept in concealing his own. He considered it as of the last consequence, in this moment of enthusiasm and exalted passion, to remove Allan from the camp for a few days, that he might provide, as his honour required, for the safety of those who had acted as his guides, when he trusted the Seer's quarrel with Dalgetty might be easily made up. Allan, at parting, only recommended to the Marquis the care of Sir Duncan Campbell, whom Montrose instantly directed to be conveyed to a place of safety. He took the same precaution for MacEagh, committing the latter, however, to a party of the Irish, with directions that he should be taken care of, but that no Highlander, of any clan, should have access to him.

The Marquis then mounted a led horse, which was held by one of his attendants, and rode on to view the scene of his victory, which was more decisive than even his ardent hopes had anticipated. Of Argyle's gallant army of three thousand men, fully one-half fell in the battle, or in the flight. They had been chiefly driven back upon that part of the plain where the river forms an angle with the lake, so that there was no free opening either for retreat or escape. Several hundreds were forced into the lake and drowned. Of the survivors, about one-half escaped by swimming the river, or by an early flight along the left bank of the lake. The remainder threw themselves into the old Castle of Inverlochy; but being without either provisions or hopes of relief, they were obliged to surrender, on condition of being suffered to return to their homes in peace. Arms, ammunition, standards, and baggage, all became the prey of the conquerors.

This was the greatest disaster that ever befell the race of Diarmid, as the Campbells were called in the High-

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lands; it being generally remarked that they were as fortunate in the issue of their undertakings, as they were sagacious in planning, and courageous in executing them. Of the number slain, nearly five hundred were dunniwassels, or gentlemen claiming descent from known and respected houses. And, in the opinion of many of the clan, even this heavy loss was exceeded by the disgrace arising from the inglorious conduct of their Chief, whose galley weighed anchor when the day was lost, and sailed down the lake with all the speed to which sails and oars could impel her.

CHAPTER XX.

Faint the din of battle bray'd,
Distant down the hollow wind;
War and terror fled before,
Wounds and death remain behind.
Penrose.

MONTROSE's splendid success over his powerful rival was not attained without some loss, though not amounting to the tenth of what he inflicted. The obstinate valour of the Campbells cost the lives of many brave men of the opposite party; and more were wounded, the chief of whom was the brave young Earl of Menteith, who had commanded the centre. He was but slightly touched however, and made rather a graceful than a terrible appearance when he presented to his general the standard of Argyle, which he had taken from the standard-bearer with his own hand, and slain him in single combat. Montrose dearly loved his noble kinsman, in whom there was conspicuous a flash of the generous, romantic, disinterested chivalry of the old heroic times, entirely different from the sordid, calculating, and selfish character, which the practice of entertaining mercenary troops had

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introduced into most parts of Europe, and of which degeneracy Scotland, which furnished soldiers of fortune for the service of almost every nation, had been contaminated with a more than usual share. Montrose, whose native spirit was congenial, although experience had taught him how to avail himself of the motives of others, used to Menteith neither the language of praise nor of promise, but clasped him to his bosom as he exclaimed, "my gallant kinsman!" And by this burst of heartfelt applause was Menteith thrilled with a warmer glow of delight, than if his praises had been recorded in a report of the action sent directly to the throne of his sovereign.

"Nothing," he said, "my lord, now seems to remain in which I can render any assistance; permit me to look after a duty of humanity—the Knight of Ardenvohr, as I am told, is our prisoner, and severely wounded."

"And well he deserves to be so," said Sir Dugald Dalgetty, who came up to them at that moment with a prodigious addition of acquired importance, "since he shot my good horse at the time that I was offering him honourable quarter, which, I must needs say, was done more like an ignorant Highland Cateran, who has not sense enough to erect a sconce for the protection of his old hurley-house of a castle, than like a soldier of worth and quality."

"Are we to condole with you then," said Lord Menteith, "upon the loss of the famed Gustavus?"

"Even so, my lord," answered the soldier, with a deep sigh, "*Diem clausit supremum*, as we said at the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen. Better so than be smothered like a cadger's pony in some flow-moss, or snow-wreath, which was like to be his fate if this winter campaign lasted longer. But it has pleased his Excellency (making an inclination to Montrose) to supply his place by the gift of a noble steed, whom I have taken the freedom to name '*Loyalty's Reward*,' in memory of this celebrated occasion."

"I hope," said the Marquis, "you'll find Loyalty's Reward, since you call him so, practised in all the duties

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of the field,—but I must just hint to you, that at this time, in Scotland, loyalty is more frequently rewarded with a halter, than with a horse."

"Ahem! your Excellency is pleased to be facetious. Loyalty's Reward is as perfect as Gustavus in all his exercises, and of a far finer figure. Marry! his social qualities are less cultivated, in respect he has kept till now inferior company."

"Not meaning his Excellency the General, I hope," said Lord Menteith. "For shame, Sir Dugald!"

"My lord," answered the knight gravely, "I am incapable to mean anything so utterly misbecoming. What I asseverate is, that his Excellency, having the same intercourse with his horse during his exercise, that he hath with his soldiers when training them, may form and break either to every feat of war which he chooses to practise, and accordingly that this noble charger is admirably managed. But as it is the intercourse of private life that formeth the social character, so I do not apprehend that of the single soldier to be much polished by the conversation of the corporal or the sergeant, or that of Loyalty's Reward to have been much dulcified, or ameliorated, by the society of his Excellency's grooms, who bestow more oaths, and kicks, and thumps, than kindness or caresses upon the animals intrusted to their charge, whereby many a generous quadruped, rendered as it were misanthropic, manifests, during the rest of his life, a greater desire to kick and bite his master, than to love and to honour him."

"Spoken like an oracle," said Montrose.—"Were there an academy for the education of horses to be annexed to the Mareschal-College of Aberdeen, Sir Dugald Dalgetty alone should fill the chair."

"Because, being an ass," said Menteith, aside to the General, "there would be some distant relation between the professor and the students."

"And now, with your Excellency's permission," said the new-made Knight, "I am going to pay my last visit to the remains of my old companion in arms."

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"Not with the purpose of going through the ceremonial of interment?" said the Marquis, who did not know how far Sir Dugald's enthusiasm might lead him; "consider, our brave fellows themselves will have but a hasty burial."

"Your Excellency will pardon me," said Dalgetty; "my purpose is less romantic. I go to divide poor Gustavus's legacy with the fowls of heaven, leaving the flesh to them, and reserving to myself his hide; which, in token of affectionate remembrance, I purpose to form into a cassock and trowsers after the Tartar fashion, to be worn under my armour, in respect my nether garments are at present shamefully the worse for the wear.—Alas! poor Gustavus, why didst thou not live at least one hour more, to have borne the honoured weight of knighthood upon thy loins!"

He was now turning away when the Marquis called after him,—"As you are not likely to be anticipated in this act of kindness, Sir Dugald, to your old friend and companion, I trust," said the Marquis, "you will first assist me, and our principal friends, to discuss some of Argyle's good cheer, of which we have found abundance in the Castle."

"Most willingly, please your Excellency," said Sir Dugald, "as meat and mass never hinder work. Nor, indeed, am I afraid that the wolves or eagles will begin an onslaught on Gustavus to-night, in regard there is so much better cheer lying all around. But," added he, "as I am to meet two honourable knights of England, with others of the knightly degree, in your lordship's army, I pray it may be explained to them, that now, and in future, I claim precedence over them all, in respect of my rank as a Banneret, dubbed in a field of stricken battle."

"The devil confound him!" said Montrose, speaking aside; "he has contrived to set the kiln on fire as fast as I put it out.—This is a point, Sir Dugald," said he, gravely addressing him, "which I shall reserve for his majesty's express consideration: in my camp all must be upon

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equality, like the Knights of the Round Table; and take their places as soldiers should, upon the principle of—first come, first served."

"Then I shall take care," said Menteith, apart to the Marquis, "that Don Dugald is not first in place to-day.—Sir Dugald," added he, raising his voice, "as you say your wardrobe is out of repair, had you not better go to the enemy's baggage yonder, over which their is a guard placed? I saw them take out an excellent buff suit, embroidered in front in silk and silver."

"*Voto a Dios!* as the Spaniard says," exclaimed the Major, "and some beggarly gilly may get it while I stand prating here!"

The prospect of booty having at once driven out of his head both Gustavus and the provant, he set spurs to Loyalty's Reward, and rode off through the field of battle.

"There goes the hound," said Menteith, "breaking the face, and trampling on the body, of many a better man than himself; and as eager on his sordid spoil as a vulture that stoops upon carrion. Yet this man the world calls a soldier—and you, my lord, select him as worthy of the honours of chivalry, if such they can at this day be termed. You have made the collar of knighthood the decoration of a mere blood-hound."

"What could I do?" said Montrose. "I had no half-picked bones to give him, and bribed in some manner he must be,—I cannot follow the chase alone. Besides, the dog has good qualities."

"If nature has given him such," said Menteith, "habit has converted them into feelings of intense selfishness. He may be punctilious concerning his reputation, and brave in the execution of his duty, but it is only because without these qualities he cannot rise in the service; nay, his very benevolence is selfish; he may defend his companion while he can keep his feet, but the instant he is down, Sir Dugald will be as ready to ease him of his purse, as he is to convert the skin of Gustavus into a buff jerkin."

"And yet, if all this were true, cousin," answered Montrose, "there is something convenient in commanding a soldier, upon whose motives and springs of action you can

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calculate to a mathematical certainty. A fine spirit like yours, my cousin, alive to a thousand sensations to which this man's is as impervious as his corslet,—it is for such that thy friend must feel, while he gives his advice." Then suddenly changing his tone, he asked Mentieth when he had seen Annot Lyle.

The young Earl coloured deeply, and answered, "Not since last evening,—excepting," he added, with hesitation, "for one moment, about half an hour before the battle began."

"My dear Menteith," said Montrose, very kindly, "were you one of the gay cavaliers of Whitehall, who are, in their way, as great self-seekers as our friend Dalgetty, should I need to plague you with inquiring into such an amourette as this? it would be an intrigue only to be laughed at. But this is the land of enchantment, where nets strong as steel are wrought out of ladies' tresses, and you are exactly the destined knight to be so fettered. This poor girl is exquisitely beautiful, and has talents formed to captivate your romantic temper. You cannot think of injuring her—you *cannot* think of marrying her?"

"My lord," replied Menteith, "you have repeatedly urged this jest, for so I trust it is meant, somewhat beyond bounds. Annot Lyle is of unknown birth,—a captive,—the daughter, probably, of some obscure outlaw; a dependant on the hospitality of the M'Aulays."

"Do not be angry, Menteith," said the Marquis, interrupting him; "you love the classics, though not educated at Mareschal-College; and you may remember how many gallant hearts captive beauty has subdued:—

> Movit Ajacem Telamone natum
> Forma captivæ dominum Tecmessæ.

In a word, I am seriously anxious about this—I should not have time perhaps," he added very gravely, "to trouble you with my lectures on the subject, were your feelings, and those of Annot, alone interested; but you have a dangerous rival in Allan M'Aulay; and there is no knowing to what extent he may carry his resentment. It is

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my duty to tell you, that the King's service may be much prejudiced by dissensions betwixt you."

"My lord," said Menteith, "I know what you mean is kind and friendly; "I hope you will be satisfied when I assure you, that Allan M'Aulay and I have discussed this circumstance; and that I have explained to him, that it is utterly remote from my character to entertain dishonourable views concerning this unprotected female; so, on the other hand, the obscurity of her birth prevents my thinking of her upon other terms. I will not disguise from your lordship, what I have not disguised from M'Aulay, —that if Annot Lyle were born a lady, she should share my name and rank; as matters stand, it is impossible. This explanation, I trust, will satisfy your lordship, as it has satisfied a less reasonable person." Montrose shrugged his shoulders.

"And, like true champions in romance," he said, "you have agreed, that you are both to worship the same mistress, as idolaters do the same image, and that neither shall extend his pretensions farther?"

"I did not go so far, my lord," answered Menteith— "I only said in the present circumstances,—and there is no prospect of their being changed,—I could, in duty to myself and family, stand in no relation to Annot Lyle, but as that of friend or brother—but your lordship must excuse me; I have," said he, looking at his arm, round which he had tied his handkerchief, "a slight hurt to attend to."

"A wound?" said Montrose, anxiously; "let me see it.—Alas!" he said, "I should have heard nothing of this, had I not ventured to tent and sound another more secret and more rankling one. Menteith, I am sorry for you—I too have known—but what avails it to awake sorrows which have long slumbered!"

So saying he shook hands with his noble kinsman, and walked into the castle.

Annot Lyle, as was not unusual for females in the Highlands, was possessed of a slight degree of medical, and

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even surgical skill. It may readily be believed, that the profession of surgery, or medicine, as a separate art, was unknown, and the few rude rules which they observed were intrusted to women, or to the aged, whom constant casualties afforded too much opportunity of acquiring experience. The care and attention, accordingly, of Annot Lyle, her attendants, and others acting under her direction, had made her services extremely useful during this wild campaign. And most readily had these services been rendered to friend and foe, wherever they could be most useful. She was now in an apartment of the castle, anxiously superintending the preparation of vulnerary herbs, to be applied to the wounded; receiving reports from different females respecting those under their separate charge, and distributing what means she had for their relief, when Allan M'Aulay suddenly entered the apartment. She started, for she had heard that he had left the camp upon a distant mission; and, however accustomed she was to the gloom of his countenance, it seemed at present to have even a darker shade than usual. He stood before her perfectly silent, and she felt the necessity of being the first to speak.

"I thought," she said, with some effort, "you had already set out."

"My companion awaits me," said Allan; "I go instantly."

Yet still he stood before her, and held her by the arm, with a pressure which, though insufficient to give her pain, made her sensible of his great personal strength, his hand closing on her like the gripe of a manacle.

"Shall I take the harp?" she said, in a timid voice; "is—is the shadow falling upon you?"

Instead of replying, he led her to the window of the apartment, which commanded a view of the field of the slain, with all its horrors. It was thick spread with dead and wounded, and the spoilers were busy tearing the clothes from the victims of war and feudal ambition, with as much indifference, as if they had not been of the same

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species, and themselves exposed, perhaps to-morrow, to the same fate.

"Does the sight please you?" said M'Aulay.

"It is hideous!" said Annot, covering her eyes with her hands; "How can you bid me look upon it?"

"You must be inured to it," said he, "if you remain with this destined host—you will soon have to search such a field for my brother's corpse—for Menteith's—for mine—but that will be a more indifferent task—You do not love me!"

"This is the first time you have taxed me with unkindness," said Annot, weeping. "You are my brother—my preserver—my protector—and can I then *but* love you? But your hour of darkness is approaching, let me fetch my harp!——"

"Remain," said Allan, still holding her fast; "be my visions from heaven or hell, or from the middle sphere of disembodied spirits—or be they, as the Saxons hold, but the delusions of an overheated fancy, they do not now influence me; I speak the language of the natural, of the visible world.—You love not me, Annot—you love Menteith—by him you are beloved again, and Allan is no more to you than one of the corpses which encumber yonder heath."

It cannot be supposed that this strange speech conveyed any new information to her who was thus addressed. No woman ever lived who could not in the same circumstances have discerned long since the state of her lover's mind. But by thus suddenly tearing off the veil, thin as it was, Allan prepared her to expect consequences violent in proportion to the enthusiasm of his character. She made an effort to repel the charge he had stated.

"You forget," she said, "your own worth and nobleness when you insult so very helpless a being, and one whom fate has thrown so totally into your power. You know who and what I am, and how impossible it is that Menteith or you can use language of affection to me, beyond that of friendship. You know from what unhappy race I have too probably derived my existence."

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"I will not believe it," said Allan impetuously; "never flowed crystal drop from a polluted spring."

"Yet the very doubt," pleaded Annot, "should make you forbear to use this language to me."

"I know," said M'Aulay, "it places a bar between us —but I know also that it divides you not so inseparably from Menteith.—Hear me, my beloved Annot!—leave this scene of terrors and danger—go with me to Kintail—I will place you in the house of the noble lady of Seaforth —or you shall be removed in safety to Icolmkill, where some women yet devote themselves to the worship of God, after the custom of our ancestors."

"You consider not what you ask of me," replied Annot; "to undertake such a journey under your sole guardianship, were to show me less scrupulous than maiden ought. I will remain here, Allan—here, under the protection of the noble Montrose; and when his motions next approach the Lowlands, I will contrive some proper means to relieve you of one, who has, she knows not how, become an object of dislike to you."

Allan stood as if uncertain whether to give way to sympathy with her distress, or to anger at her resistance.

"Annot," he said, "you know too well how little your words apply to my feelings towards you—but you avail yourself of your power, and you rejoice in my departure, as removing a spy upon your intercourse with Menteith. But beware, both of you," he added, in a stern tone; "for when was it ever heard that an injury was offered to Allan M'Aulay, for which he exacted not tenfold vengeance?"

So saying, he pressed her arm forcibly, pulled the bonnet over his brows, and strode out of the apartment.

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CHAPTER XXI.

———After you're gone,
I grew acquainted with my heart, and search'd
What stirr'd it so.—Alas! I found it love.
Yet far from lust, for could I but have lived
In presence of you, I had had my end.

Philaster.

ANNOT LYLE had now to contemplate the terrible gulf which Allan M'Aulay's declaration of love and jealousy had made to open around her. It seemed as if she was tottering on the very brink of destruction, and was at once deprived of every refuge, and of all human assistance. She had long been conscious that she loved Menteith dearer than a brother; indeed, how could it be otherwise, considering their early intimacy,—the personal merit of the young nobleman,—his assiduous attentions,—and his infinite superiority in gentleness of disposition, and grace of manners, over the race of rude warriors with whom she lived? But her affection was of that quiet, timid, meditative character, which sought rather a reflected share in the happiness of the beloved object, than formed more presumptuous or daring hopes. A little Gaelic song, in which she expressed her feelings, has been translated by the ingenious and unhappy Andrew M'Donald; and we willingly transcribe the lines:—

Wert thou, like me, in life's low vale,
With thee how blest, that lot I'd share;
With thee I'd fly wherever gale
Could waft, or bounding galley bear.
But parted by severe decree,
Far different must our fortunes prove;
May thine be joy—enough for me
To weep and pray for him I love.

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The pangs this foolish heart must feel,
When hope shall be for ever flown,
No sullen murmur shall reveal,
No selfish murmurs ever own.
Nor will I through life's weary years,
Like a pale drooping mourner move,
While I can think my secret tears
May wound the heart of him I love.

The furious declaration of Allan had destroyed the romantic plan which she had formed, of nursing in secret her pensive tenderness, without seeking any other requital. Long before this she had dreaded Allan, as much as gratitude, and a sense that he softened towards her a temper so haughty and so violent, could permit her to do; but now she regarded him with unalloyed terror, which a perfect knowledge of his disposition, and of his preceding history, too well authorized her to entertain. Whatever was in other respects the nobleness of his disposition, he had never been known to resist the wilfulness of passion, —he walked in the house, and in the country of his fathers, like a tamed lion, whom no one dared to contradict, lest they should awaken his natural vehemence of passion. So many years had elapsed since he had experienced contradiction, or even expostulation, that probably nothing but the strong good sense, which, on all points, his mysticism excepted, formed the ground of his character, prevented his proving an annoyance and terror to the whole neighbourhood. But Annot had no time to dwell upon her fears, being interrupted by the entrance of Sir Dugald Dalgetty.

It may well be supposed, that the scenes in which this person had passed his former life, had not much qualified him to shine in female society. He himself felt a sort of consciousness that the language of the barrack, guard-room, and parade, was not proper to entertain ladies. The only peaceful part of his life had been spent at Mareschal-College, Aberdeen; and he had forgot the little he had learned there, except the arts of darning his own hose, and despatching his

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commons with unusual celerity, both which had since been kept in good exercise by the necessity of frequent practice. Still it was from an imperfect recollection of what he had acquired during this pacific period, that he drew his sources of conversation when in company with women; in other words, his language became pedantic when it ceased to be military.

"Mistress Annot Lyle," said he, upon the present occasion, "I am just now like the half-pike, or spontoon of Achilles, one end of which could wound, and the other cure—a property belonging neither to Spanish pike, brown-bill, partizan, halbert, Lochaber-axe, or indeed any other modern staff-weapon whatever."

This compliment he repeated twice; but as Annot scarce heard him the first time, and did not comprehend him the second, he was obliged to explain.

"I mean," he said, "Mistress Annot Lyle, that having been the means of an honourable knight receiving a severe wound in this day's conflict,—he having pistolled, somewhat against the law of arms, my horse, which was named after the immortal King of Sweden,—I am desirous of procuring him such solacement as you, madam, can supply, you being, like the heathen god Esculapius, (meaning possibly Apollo,) skilful not only in song and in music, but in the more noble art of chirurgery—*opiferque per orbem dicor.*"

"If you would have the goodness to explain," said Annot, too sick at heart to be amused by Sir Dugald's airs of pedantic gallantry.

"That, madam," replied the knight, "may not be so easy, as I am out of the habit of construing—but we shall try. *Dicor*, supply *ego*—I am called.—*Opifer? opifer?*—I remember *signifer*, and *furcifer*—but I believe *opifer* stands in this place for M. D., that is Doctor of Physic."

"This is a busy day with us all," said Annot; "will you say at once what you want with me?"

"Merely," replied Sir Dugald, "that you will visit my brother knight and let your maiden bring some medica-

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ments for his wound, which threatens to be what the learned call a *damnum fatale*."

Annot Lyle never lingered in the cause of humanity. She informed herself hastily of the nature of the injury, and interesting herself for the dignified old Chief whom she had seen at Darnlinvarach, and whose presence had so much struck her, she hastened to lose the sense of her own sorrow for a time, in the attempt to be useful to another.

Sir Dugald, with great form, ushered Annot Lyle to the chamber of her patient, in which, to her surprise, she found Lord Menteith. She could not help blushing deeply at the meeting, but, to hide her confusion, proceeded instantly to examine the wound of the Knight of Ardenvohr, and easily satisfied herself, that is was beyond her skill to cure it. As for Sir Dugald, he returned to a large out-house, on the floor of which, among other wounded men, was deposited the person of Ranald of the Mist.

"Mine old friend," said the Knight, "as I told you before, I would willingly do anything to pleasure you, in return for the wound you have received, while under my safe-conduct. I have, therefore, according to your earnest request, sent Mrs. Annot Lyle to attend upon the wound of the Knight of Ardenvohr, though, wherein her doing so should benefit you, I cannot imagine. I think you once spoke of some blood relationship between them; but a soldado, in command and charge like me, has other things to trouble his head with than Highland genealogies."

And, indeed, to do the worthy Major justice, he never inquired after, listened to, or recollected, the business of other people, unless it either related to the art military, or was somehow or other connected with his own interest; in either of which cases his memory was very tenacious.

"And now, my good friend of the Mist," said he, "can you tell me what has become of your hopeful grandson, as I have not seen him since he assisted me to disarm after the action—a negligence which deserveth the strapado?"

"He is not far from hence," said the wounded outlaw —"lift not your hand upon him, for he is man enough

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to pay a yard of leathern scourge with a foot of tempered steel."

"A most improper vaunt," said Sir Dugald; "but I owe you some favours, Ranald, and therefore shall let it pass."

"And if you think you owe me anything," said the outlaw, "it is in your power to requite me by granting me a boon."

"Friend Ranald," answered Dalgetty, "I have read of these boons in silly story-books, whereby simple knights were drawn into engagements to their great prejudice; wherefore, Ranald, the more prudent knights of this day never promise anything until they know that they may keep their word anent the premises, without any displeasure or incommodement to themselves. It may be, you would have me engage the female chirurgeon to visit your wound; though you ought to consider, Ranald, that the uncleanness of the place where you are deposited may somewhat soil the gaiety of her garments, concerning the preservation of which, you may have observed, women are apt to be inordinately solicitous. I lost the favour of the lady of the Grand Pensionary of Amsterdam, by touching with the sole of my boot the train of her black velvet gown, which I mistook for a foot-cloth, it being half the room distant from her person."

"It is not to bring Annot Lyle hither," answered MacEagh, "but to transport me into the room where she is in attendance upon the Knight of Ardenvohr. Somewhat I have to say of the last consequence to them both."

"It is something out of the order of due precedence," said Dalgetty, "to carry a wounded outlaw into the presence of a knight; knighthood having been of yore, and being, in some respects, still, the highest military grade, independent always of commissioned officers, who rank according to their patents; nevertheless, as your boon, as you call it, is so slight, I shall not deny compliance with the same." So saying, he ordered three files of men to transport MacEagh on their shoulders to Sir Duncan Campbell's apartment, and he himself hastened before to

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announce the cause of his being brought thither. But such was the activity of the soldiers employed, that they followed him close at the heels, and, entering with their ghastly burden, laid MacEagh on the floor of the apartment. His features, naturally wild, were now distorted by pain; his hands and scanty garments stained with his own blood, and those of others, which no kind hand had wiped away, although the wound in his side had been secured by a bandage.

"Are you," he said, raising his head painfully towards the couch where lay stretched his late antagonist, "he whom men call the Knight of Ardenvohr?"

"The same," answered Sir Duncan,—"what would you with one whose hours are now numbered?"

"My hours are reduced to minutes," said the outlaw; "the more grace, if I bestow them in the service of one, whose hand has ever been against me, as mine has been raised higher against him."

"Thine higher against me!—Crushed worm!" said the Knight, looking down on his miserable adversary.

"Yes," answered the outlaw, in a firm voice, "my arm hath been highest. In the deadly contest betwixt us, the wounds I have dealt have been deepest, though thine have neither been idle nor unfelt.—I am Ranald MacEagh—I am Ranald of the Mist—the night that I gave thy castle to the winds in one huge blaze of fire, is now matched with the day in which you have fallen under the sword of my fathers.—Remember the injuries thou hast done our tribe—never were such inflicted, save by *one*, beside thee. He, they say, is fated and secure against our vengeance—a short time will show."

"My Lord Menteith," said Sir Duncan, raising himself out of his bed, "this is a proclaimed villain, at once the enemy of King and Parliament, of God and man—one of the outlawed banditti of the Mist; alike the enemy of your house, of the M'Aulays, and of mine. I trust you will not suffer moments, which are perhaps my last, to be embittered by his barbarous triumph."

"He shall have the treatment he merits," said Menteith; "let him be instantly removed."

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Sir Dugald here interposed, and spoke of Ranald's services as a guide, and his own pledge for his safety; but high harsh tones of the outlaw drowned his voice.

No," said he, "be rack and gibbet the word! let me hither between heaven and earth, and gorge the hawks and eagles of Ben-Nevis; and so shall this haughty Knight, and this triumphant Thane, never learn the secret I alone can impart; a secret which would make Ardenvohr's heart leap with joy, were he in the death agony, and which the Earl of Menteith would purchase at the price of his broad earldom.—Come hither, Annot Lyle," he said, raising himself with unexpected strength; "fear not the sight of him to whom thou hast clung in infancy. Tell these proud men, who disdain thee as the issue of mine ancient race, that thou art no blood of ours—no daughter of the race of the Mist, but born in halls as lordly, and cradled on couch as soft, as ever soothed infancy in their proudest palaces."

"In the name of God," said Menteith, trembling with emotion, "if you know aught of the birth of this lady do thy conscience the justice to disburden it of the secret before departing from this world!"

"And bless my enemies with my dying breath?" said MacEagh, looking at him malignantly.—"Such are the maxims your priests preach—but when, or towards whom, do you practise them? Let me know first the worth of my secret ere I part with it—What would you give, Knight of Ardenvohr, to know that your superstitious fasts have been vain, and that there still remains a descendant of your house?—I pause for an answer—without it, I speak not one word more."

"I could," said Sir Duncan, his voice struggling between the emotions of doubt, hatred, and anxiety—"I could—but that I know thy race are like the Great Enemy, liars and murderers from the beginning—but could it be true thou tellest me, I could almost forgive thee the injuries thou hast done me."

"Hear it!" said Ranald; "he hath wagered deeply for a son of Diarmid—And you, gentle Thane, the report

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of the camp says, that you would purchase with life and lands the tidings that Annot Lyle was no daughter of proscription, but of a race noble in your estimation as your own—Well—It is for no love I tell you—The time has been that I would have exchanged this secret against liberty, I am now bartering it for what is dearer than liberty or life.—Annot Lyle is the youngest, the sole surviving child of the Knight of Ardenvohr, who alone was saved, when all in his halls besides was given to blood and ashes."

"Can this man speak truth?" said Annot Lyle, scarce knowing what she said; "or is this some strange delusion?"

"Maiden," replied Ranald, "hadst thou dwelt longer with us, thou wouldst have better learnt to know how to distinguish the accents of truth. To that Saxon lord, and to the Knight of Ardenvohr, I will yield such proofs of what I have spoken, that incredulity shall stand convinced. Meantime, withdraw—I loved thine infancy, I hate not thy youth—no eye hates the rose in its blossom, though it groweth upon a thorn, and for thee only do I something regret what is soon to follow. But he that would avenge him of his foe must not reck though the guiltless be engaged in the ruin."

"He advises well, Annot," said Lord Menteith; "in God's name retire! if—if there be aught in this, your meeting with Sir Duncan must be more prepared for both your sakes."

"I will not part from my father, if I have found one!" said Annot—"I will not part from him under circumstances so terrible."

"And a father you shall ever find in me," murmured Sir Duncan.

"Then," said Menteith, "I will have MacEagh removed into an adjacent apartment, and will collect the evidence of his tale myself. Sir Dugald Dalgetty will give me his attendance and assistance."

"With pleasure, my lord," answered Sir Dugald.—"I will be your confessor, or assessor—either or both. No one can be so fit, for I had heard the whole story a month

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ago at Inverary castle—but onslaughts like that of Ardenvohr confuse each other in my memory, which is besides occupied with matters of more importance."

Upon hearing this frank declaration, which was made as they left the apartment with the wounded man, Lord Menteith darted upon Dalgetty a look of extreme anger and disdain, to which the self-conceit of the worthy commander rendered him totally insensible.

CHAPTER XXII.

I am as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.
Conquest of Grenada.

The Earl of Menteith, as he had undertaken, so he proceeded to investigate more closely the story told by Ranald of the Mist, which was corroborated by the examination of his two followers, who had assisted in the capacity of guides. These declarations he carefully compared with such circumstances concerning the destruction of his castle and family as Sir Duncan Campbell was able to supply; and it may be supposed he had forgotten nothing relating to an event of such terrific importance. It was of the last consequence to prove that this was no invention of the outlaw's, for the purpose of passing an impostor as the child and heiress of Ardenvohr.

Perhaps Menteith, so much interested in believing the tale, was not altogether the fittest person to be entrusted with the investigation of its truth; but the examinations of the Children of the Mist were simple, accurate, and in all respects consistent with each other. A personal mark was referred to, which was known to have been borne by the infant child of Sir Duncan, and which appeared upon

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the left shoulder of Annot Lyle. It was also well remembered, that when the miserable relics of the other children had been collected, those of the infant had no where been found. Other circumstances of evidence, which it is unnecessary to quote, brought the fullest conviction not only to Menteith, but to the unprejudiced mind of Montrose, that in Annot Lyle, a humble dependant, distinguished only by beauty and talent, they were in future to respect the heiress of Ardenvohr.

While Menteith hastened to communicate the result of these inquiries to the persons most interested, the outlaw demanded to speak with his grandchild, whom he usually called his son.

"He would be found," he said, "in the outer apartment, in which he himself had been originally deposited."

Accordingly, the young savage, after a close search, was found lurking in a corner, coiled up among some rotten straw, and brought to his grandsire.

"Kenneth," said the old outlaw, "hear the last words of the sire of thy father. A Saxon soldier, and Allan of the Red-hand, left this camp within these few hours, to travel to the country of Caberfae. Pursue them as the blood-hound pursues the hurt deer—swim the lake—climb the mountain—thread the forest—tarry not until you join them;" and then the countenance of the lad darkened as his grandfather spoke, and he laid his hand upon a knife which stuck in the thong of leather that confined his scanty plaid. "No!" said the old man; "it is not by thy hand he must fall. They will ask the news from the camp—say to them that Annot Lyle of the Harp is discovered to be the daughter of Duncan of Ardenvohr; that the Thane of Menteith is to wed her before the priest; and that you are sent to bid guests to the bridal. Tarry not their answer, but vanish like the lightning when the black cloud swallows it.—And now depart, beloved son of my best beloved! I shall never more see thy face, nor hear the light sound of thy footstep—yet tarry an instant, and hear my last charge. Remember the fate of our race, and quit not the ancient manners of the Children of the Mist. We

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are now a straggling handful, driven from every vale by the sword of every clan, who rule in the possessions where their forefathers hewed the wood, and drew the water for ours. But in the thicket of the wilderness, and in the mist of the mountain, Kenneth, son of Eracht, keep thou unsoiled the freedom which I leave thee as a birth-right. Barter it not, neither for the rich garment, nor for the stone-roof, nor for the covered board, nor for the couch of down—on the rock or in the valley, in abundance or in famine—in the leafy summer, and in the days of the iron winter—Son of the Mist! be free as thy forefathers. Own no lord—receive no law—take no hire—give no stipend—build no hut—inclose no pasture—sow no grain; —let the deer of the mountain be thy flocks and herds—if these fail thee, prey upon the goods of our oppressors —of the Saxons, and of such Gael as are Saxons in their souls, valuing herds and flocks more than honour and freedom. Well for us that they do so—it affords the broader scope for our revenge. Remember those who have done kindness to our race, and pay their services with thy blood, should the hour require it. If a Maclan shall come to thee with the head of the King's son in his hand, shelter him, though the avenging army of the father were behind him, for in Glencoe and Ardnamurchan, we have dwelt in peace in the years that have gone by. The sons of Diarmid—the race of Darnlinvarach—the riders of Menteith—my curse on thy head, Child of the Mist, if thou spare one of those names, when the time shall offer for cutting them off!—and it will come anon, for their own swords shall devour each other, and those who are scattered shall fly to the Mist, and perish by its Children. Once more, begone—shake the dust from thy feet against the habitations of men, whether banded together for peace or for war. Farewell, beloved! and may'st thou die like thy forefathers, ere infirmity, disease, or age, shall break thy spirit—begone!—begone! live free—requite kindness—avenge the injuries of thy race!"

The young savage stooped, and kissed the brow of his dying parent; but accustomed from infancy to suppress

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every exterior sign of emotion, he parted without tear or adieu, and was soon far beyond the limits of Montrose's camp.

Sir Dugald Dalgetty, who was present during the latter part of this scene, was very little edified by the conduct of MacEagh upon the occasion. "I cannot think, my friend Ranald," said he, "that you are in the best possible road for a dying man. Storms, onslaughts, massacres, the burning of suburbs, are indeed a soldier's daily work, and are justified by the necessity of the case, seeing that they are done in the course of duty; for burning of suburbs, in particular, it may be said that they are traitors and cut-throats to all fortified towns. Hence it is plain, that a soldier is a profession peculiarly favoured by heaven, seeing that we may hope for salvation, although we daily commit actions of so great violence. But then, Ranald, in all services of Europe, it is the custom of the dying soldier not to vaunt him of such doings, or to recommend them to his fellows; but, on the contrary, to express contrition for the same, and to repeat, or have repeated to him, some comfortable prayer; which, if you please, I will intercede with his Excellency's chaplain to prefer on your account. It is otherwise no point of my duty to put you in mind of those things; only it may be for the ease of your conscience to depart more like a Christian, and less like a Turk, than you seem to be in a fair way of doing."

The only answer of the dying man—(for as such Ranald MacEagh might now be considered)—was a request to be raised to such a position that he might obtain a view from the window of the castle. The deep frost-mist, which had long settled upon the top of the mountains, was now rolling down each rugged glen and gully, where the craggy ridges showed their black and irregular outline, like desert islands rising above the ocean of vapour. "Spirit of the Mist!" said Ranald MacEagh, "called by our race our father, and our preserver—receive into thy tabernacle of clouds, when this pang is over, him whom in life thou hast so often sheltered." So saying,

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he sunk back into the arms of those who upheld him, spoke no further word, but turned his face to the wall for a short space.

"I believe," said Dalgetty, "my friend Ranald will be found in his heart to be little better than a heathen." And he renewed his proposal to procure him the assistance of Dr. Wisheart, Montrose's military chaplain; "a man," said Sir Dugald, "very clever in his exercise, and who will do execution on your sins in less time than I could smoke a pipe of tobacco."

"Saxon," said the dying man, "speak to me no more of thy priest—I die contented. Hadst thou ever an enemy against whom weapons were of no avail—whom the ball missed, and against whom the arrow shivered, and whose bare skin was as impenetrable to sword and dirk as thy steel garment?—Heardst thou ever of such a foe?"

"Very frequently, when I served in Germany," replied Sir Dugald. "There was such a fellow at Ingolstadt; he was proof both against lead and steel. The soldiers killed him with the buts of their muskets."

"This impassable foe," said Ranald, without regarding the Major's interruption, "who has the blood dearest to me upon his hands—to this man I have now bequeathed agony of mind, jealousy, despair, and sudden death,—or a life more miserable than death itself. Such shall be the lot of Allan of the Red-hand, when he learns that Annot weds Menteith; and I ask no more than the certainty that it is so, to sweeten my own bloody end by his hand."

"If that be the case," said the Major, "there's no more to be said; but I shall take care as few people see you as possible, for I cannot think your mode of departure can be at all creditable or exemplary to a Christian army." So saying, he left the apartment, and the Son of the Mist soon after breathed his last.

Menteith, in the meanwhile, leaving the new-found relations to their mutual feelings of mingled emotion, was

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eagerly discussing with Montrose the consequences of this discovery. "I should now see," said the Marquis, "even had I not before observed it, that your interest in this discovery, my dear Menteith, has no small reference to your own happiness. You love this new-found lady,—your affection is returned. In point of birth no exceptions can be made; in every other respect, her advantages are equal to those which you yourself possess—think, however, a moment. Sir Duncan is a fanatic—Presbyterian at least—in arms against the King; he is only with us in the quality of a prisoner, and we are, I fear, but at the commencement of a long civil war. Is this a time, think you, Menteith, for you to make proposals for his heiress? Or what chance is there that he will now listen to it?"

Passion, an ingenious, as well as an eloquent advocate, supplied the young nobleman with a thousand answers to these objections. He reminded Montrose that the Knight of Ardenvohr was neither a bigot in politics nor religion. He urged his own known and proved zeal for the royal cause, and hinted that its influence might be extended and strengthened by his wedding the heiress of Ardenvohr. He pleaded the dangerous state of Sir Duncan's wound, the risk which must be run by suffering the young lady to be carried into the country of the Campbells, where, in case of her father's death, or continued indisposition, she must necessarily be placed under the guardianship of Argyle, an event fatal to his (Menteith's) hopes, unless he could stoop to purchase his favour by abandoning the King's party.

Montrose allowed the force of these arguments, and owned, although the matter was attended with difficulty, yet it seemed consistent with the King's service that it should be concluded as speedily as possible.

"I could wish," said he, "that it were all settled in one way or another, and that this fair Briseis were removed from our camp before the return of our Highland Achilles, Allan M'Aulay.—I fear some fatal feud in that quarter, Menteith—and I believe it would be best that Sir Duncan be dismissed on his parole, and that you accompany him and

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his daughter as his escort. The journey can be made chiefly by water, so will not greatly incommode his wound —and your own, my friend, will be an honourable excuse for the absence of some time from my camp."

"Never!" said Menteith. "Were I to forfeit the very hope that has so lately dawned upon me, never will I leave your Excellency's camp while the royal standard is displayed. I should deserve that this trifling scratch should gangrene and consume my sword-arm, were I capable of holding it as an excuse for absence at this crisis of the King's affairs."

"On this, then, you are determined?" said Montrose.

"As fixed as Ben-Nevis," said the young nobleman.

"You must then," said Montrose, "lose no time in seeking an explanation with the Knight of Ardenvohr. If this prove favourable, I will talk myself with the elder M'Aulay, and we will devise means to employ his brother at a distance from the army, until he shall be reconciled to his present disappointment. Would to God some vision would descend upon his imagination, fair enough to obliterate all traces of Annot Lyle! That perhaps you think impossible, Menteith?—Well, each to his service; you to that of Cupid, and I to that of Mars."

They parted, and in pursuance of the scheme arranged, Menteith, early on the ensuing morning, sought a private interview with the wounded Knight of Ardenvohr, and communicated to him his suit for the hand of his daughter. Of their mutual attachment Sir Duncan was aware, but he was not prepared for so early a declaration on the part of Menteith. He said, at first, that he had already, perhaps, indulged too much in feelings of personal happiness, at a time when his clan had sustained so great a loss and humiliation, and that he was unwilling, therefore, farther to consider the advancement of his own house at a period so calamitous. On the more urgent suit of the noble lover, he requested a few hours to deliberate and consult with his daughter, upon a question so highly important.

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The result of this interview and deliberation was favourable to Menteith. Sir Duncan Campbell became fully sensible that the happiness of his new-found daughter depended upon a union with her lover; and unless such were now formed, he saw that Argyle would throw a thousand obstacles in the way of a match in every respect acceptable to himself. Menteith's private character was so excellent, and such was the rank and consideration due to his fortune and family, that they outbalanced, in Sir Duncan's opinion, the difference in their political opinions. Nor could he have resolved, perhaps, had his own opinion of the match been less favourable, to decline an opportunity of indulging the new-found child of his hopes. There was, besides, a feeling of pride which dictated his determination. To produce the heiress of Ardenvohr to the world, as one who had been educated a poor dependant and musician in the family of Darnlinvarach, had something in it that was humiliating. To introduce her as the betrothed bride, or wedded wife, of the Earl of Menteith, upon an attachment formed during her obscurity, was a warrant to the world, that she had at all times been worthy of the rank to which she was elevated.

It was under the influence of these considerations, that Sir Duncan Campbell announced to the lovers his consent, that they should be married in the Chapel of the Castle, by Montrose's chaplain, and as privately as possible. But when Montrose should break up from Inverlochy, for which orders were expected in the course of a very few days, it was agreed that the young Countess should depart with her father to his castle, and remain there until the circumstances of the nation permitted Menteith to retire with honour from his present military employment. His resolution being once taken, Sir Duncan Campbell would not permit the maidenly scruples of his daughter to delay its execution; and it was therefore resolved, that the bridal should take place the next evening, being the second after the battle.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

My maid—my blue-eyed maid he bore away,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day.

Ibid.

It was necessary, for many reasons, that Angus M'Aulay, so long the kind protector of Annot Lyle, should be made acquainted with the change in the fortunes of his late protegée; and Montrose, as he had undertaken, communicated to him these remarkable events. With the careless and cheerful indifference of his character, he expressed much more joy than wonder at Annot's good fortune; had no doubt whatever she would merit it, and, as she had always been bred in loyal principles, would convey the whole estate of her grim fanatical father to some honest fellow who loved the king. "I should have no objection that my brother Allan should try his chance," added he, "notwithstanding that Sir Duncan Campbell was the only man who ever charged Darnlinvarach with inhospitality. Annot Lyle could always charm Allan out of the sullens, and who knows whether matrimony might not make him more a man of this world?"

Montrose hastened to interrupt the progress of his castle-building, by informing him that the lady was already wooed and won, and with her father's approbation, was almost immediately to be wedded to his kinsman, the Earl of Menteith; and that, in testimony of the high respect due to M'Aulay, so long the lady's protector, he was now to request his presence at the ceremony. M'Aulay looked very grave at this intimation, and drew up his person with the air of one who thought that he had been neglected.

"He conceived," he said, "that his uniform kind treatment of the young lady, while so many years under

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his roof, required something more upon such an occasion than a bare compliment of ceremony. He might," he thought, " without arrogance, have expected to have been consulted. He wished his kinsman of Menteith well, no man could wish him better; but he must say, he thought he had been hasty in this matter. Allan's sentiments towards the young lady had been pretty well understood, and he for one, could not see why the superior pretensions which he had upon her gratitude should have been set aside, without at least undergoing some previous discussion."

Montrose, seeing too well where all this pointed, entreated M'Aulay to be reasonable, and to consider what probability there was that the Knight of Ardenvohr could be brought to confer the hand of his sole heiress upon Allan, whose undeniable excellent qualities were mingled with others, by which they were overclouded in a manner that made all tremble who approached him.

" My lord," said Angus M'Aulay, " my brother Allan has, as God made us all, faults as well as merits; but he is the best and bravest man of your army, be the other who he may, and therefore ill deserved that his happiness should have been so little consulted by your Excellency —by his own near kinsman—and by a young person who owes all to him and to his family.

Montrose in vain endeavoured to place the subject in a different view; this was the point in which Angus was determined to regard it, and he was a man of that calibre of understanding, who is incapable of being convinced when he has once adopted a prejudice. Montrose now assumed a higher tone, and called upon Angus to take care how he nourished any sentiments which might be prejudicial to his Majesty's service. He pointed out to him, that he was peculiarly desirous that Allan's efforts should not be interrupted in the course of his present mission; " a mission," he said, " highly honourable for himself, and likely to prove most advantageous to the King's cause. He expected his brother would hold no communication with him upon other subjects, nor stir up any

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cause of dissension, which might divert his mind from a matter of such importance."

Angus answered, somewhat sulkily, that "he was no makebate, or stirrer up of quarrels; he would rather be a peace-maker. His brother knew as well as most men how to resent his own quarrels—as for Allan's mode of receiving information, it was generally believed he had other sources than those of ordinary couriers. He should not be surprised if they saw him sooner than they expected."

A promise that he would not interfere, was the farthest to which Montrose could bring this man, thoroughly good-tempered as he was on all occasions, save when his pride, interest, or prejudices were interfered with. And at this point the Marquis was fain to leave the matter for the present.

A more willing guest at the bridal ceremony, certainly a more willing attendant at the marriage feast, was to be expected in Sir Dugald Dalgetty, whom Montrose resolved to invite, as having been a confidant to the circumstances which preceded it. But even Sir Dugald hesitated, looked on the elbows of his doublet, and the knees of his leather breeches, and mumbled out a sort of reluctant acquiescence in the invitation, providing he should find it possible, after consulting with the noble bridegroom. Montrose was somewhat surprised, but scorning to testify displeasure, he left Sir Dugald to pursue his own course.

This carried him instantly to the chamber of the bridegroom, who, amidst the scanty wardrobe which his camp-equipage afforded, was seeking for such articles as might appear to the best advantage upon the approaching occasion. Sir Dugald entered, and paid his compliments, with a very grave face upon his approaching happiness, which, he said, "he was very sorry he was prevented from witnessing."

"In plain truth," said he, "I should but disgrace the ceremony, seeing that I lack a bridal garment. Rents, and open seams, and tatters at elbows in the apparel of the assistants, might presage a similar solution of continuity in your matrimonial happiness—and to say truth, my

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lord, you yourself must partly have the blame of this disappointment, in respect you sent me upon a fool's errand to get a buff-coat out of the booty taken by the Camerons, whereas you might as well have sent me to fetch a pound of fresh butter out of a black dog's throat. I had no answer, my lord, but brandished dirks and broadswords, and a sort of growling and jabbering in what they call their language. For my part, I believe these Highlanders to be no better than absolute pagans, and have been much scandalized by the manner in which my acquaintance, Ranald MacEagh, was pleased to beat his final march, a little while since."

In Menteith's state of mind, disposed to be pleased with every thing, and every body, the grave complaint of Sir Dugald furnished additional amusement. He requested his acceptance of a very handsome buff-dress which was lying on the floor. "I had intended it," he said, "for my own bridal-garment, as being the least formidable of my warlike equipments, and I have here no peaceful dress."

Sir Dugald made the necessary apologies—would not by any means deprive—and so forth, until it happily occurred to him that it was much more according to military rule that the Earl should be married in his back and breast-pieces; which dress he had seen the bridegroom wear at the union of Prince Leo of Wittlesbach with the youngest daughter of old George Frederick of Saxony, under the auspices of the gallant Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and so forth. The good-natured young Earl laughed, and acquiesced; and thus having secured at least one merry face at his bridal, he put on a light and ornamented cuirass, concealed partly by a velvet coat, and partly by a broad blue silk scarf, which he wore over his shoulder, agreeably to his rank and the fashion of the times.

Every thing was now arranged, and it had been settled, that, according to the custom of the country, the bride and bridegroom should not again meet until they were before the altar. The hour had already struck

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that summoned the bridegroom thither, and he only waited in a small anteroom adjacent to the chapel, for the Marquis, who condescended to act as bride's-man upon the occasion. Business relating to the army having suddenly required the Marquis's instant attention, Menteith waited his return, it may be supposed, in some impatience; and when he heard the door of the apartment open, he said, laughing, "You are late upon parade."

"You will find I am too early," said Allan M'Aulay, who burst into the apartment. "Draw, Menteith, and defend yourself like a man, or die like a dog!"

"You are mad, Allan!" answered Menteith, astonished alike at his sudden appearance and at the unutterable fury of his demeanour. His cheeks were livid—his eyes started from their sockets—his lips were covered with foam, and his gestures were those of a demoniac.

"You lie, traitor!" was his frantic reply—"you lie in that, as you lie in all you have said to me. Your life is a lie!"

"Did I not speak my thoughts, when I called you mad," said Menteith, indignantly, "your own life were a brief one. In what do you charge me with deceiving you?"

"You told me," answered M'Aulay, "that you would not marry Annot Lyle!—False traitor!—she now waits you at the altar."

"It is you who speak false," retorted Menteith. "I told you the obscurity of her birth was the only bar to our union—that is now removed; and whom do you think yourself, that I should yield up my pretensions in your favour?"

"Draw then," said M'Aulay; "we understand each other."

"Not now," said Menteith, "and not here. Allan, you know me well—wait till to-morrow, and you shall have fighting enough."

"This hour—this instant—or never," answered M'Aulay. "Your triumph shall not go farther than the

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hour which is stricken. Menteith, I entreat you by our relationship—by our joint conflicts and labours—draw your sword, and defend your life!" As he spoke, he seized the Earl's hand, and wrung it with such frantic earnestness, that his grasp forced the blood to start under the nails. Menteith threw him off with violence, exclaiming, "Begone, madman!"

"Then, be the vision accomplished!" said Allan; and, drawing his dirk, struck with his whole gigantic force at the Earl's bosom. The temper of the corslet threw the point of the weapon upwards, but a deep wound took place between the neck and shoulder; and the force of the blow prostrated the bridegroom on the floor. Montrose entered at one side of the anteroom. The bridal company, alarmed at the noise, were in equal apprehension and surprise; but ere Montrose could almost see what had happened, Allan M'Aulay had rushed past him, and descended the castle stairs like lightning. "Guards, shut the gate!" exclaimed Montrose—"Seize him—kill him, if he resists!—He shall die, if he were my brother!"

But Allan prostrated, with a second blow of his dagger, a sentinel who was upon duty—traversed the camp like a mountain-deer, though pursued by all who caught the alarm—threw himself into the river, and, swimming to the opposite side, was soon lost among the woods. In the course of the same evening, his brother Angus and his followers left Montrose's camp, and, taking the road homeward, never again rejoined him.

Of Allan himself, it is said, that, in a wonderfully short space after the deed was committed, he burst into a room in the Castle of Inverary, where Argyle was sitting in council, and flung on the table his bloody dirk.

"Is it the blood of James Graham?" said Argyle, a ghastly expression of hope mixing with the terror which the sudden apparition naturally excited.

"It is the blood of his minion," answered M'Aulay—"It is the blood which I was predestined to shed, though I would rather have spilt my own."

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Having thus spoken, he turned and left the castle, and from that moment nothing certain is known of his fate. As the boy Kenneth, with three of the Children of the Mist, were seen soon afterwards to cross Lochfine, it is supposed they dogged his course, and that he perished by their hand in some obscure wilderness. Another opinion maintains, that Allan M'Aulay went abroad, and died a monk of the Carthusian order. But nothing beyond bare presumption could ever be brought in support of either opinion.

His vengeance was much less complete than he probably fancied; for Menteith, though so severely wounded as to remain long in a dangerous state, was, by having adopted Major Dalgetty's fortunate recommendation of a cuirass as a bridal-garment, happily secured from the worst consequences of the blow. But his services were lost to Montrose, and it was thought best that he should be conveyed with his intended countess, now truly a mourning bride, and should accompany his wounded father-in-law to the castle of Sir Duncan at Ardenvohr. Dalgetty followed them to the water's edge, reminding Menteith of the necessity of erecting a sconce on Drumsnab to cover his lady's newly-acquired inheritance.

They performed their voyage in safety, and Menteith was in a few weeks so well in health, as to be united to Annot in the castle of her father.

The Highlanders were somewhat puzzled to reconcile Menteith's recovery with the visions of the second sight, and the more experienced Seers were displeased with him for not having died. But others thought the credit of the vision sufficiently fulfilled, by the wound inflicted by the hand, and with the weapon, foretold; and all were of opinion, that the incident of the ring, with the death's head, related to the death of the bride's father, who did not survive her marriage many months. The incredulous held, that all this was idle dreaming, and that Allan's supposed vision was but a consequence of the private suggestions of his own passion, which, having long seen in Menteith a rival more beloved than himself, struggled

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with his better nature, and impressed upon him, as it were involuntarily, the idea of killing his competitor.

Menteith did not recover sufficiently to join Montrose during his brief and glorious career; and when that heroic general disbanded his army and retired from Scotland, Menteith resolved to adopt the life of privacy, which he led till the Restoration. After that happy event, he occupied a situation in the land befitting his rank, lived long, happy alike in public regard and in domestic affection, and died at a good old age.

Our *dramatis personæ* have been so limited, that, excepting Montrose, whose exploits and fate are the theme of history, we have only to mention Sir Dugald Dalgetty. This gentleman continued, with the most rigorous punctuality, to discharge his duty, and to receive his pay, until he was made prisoner, among others, upon the field of Philliphaugh. He was condemned to share the fate of his fellow-officers on that occasion, who were doomed to death rather by denunciations from the pulpit, than the sentence either of civil or military tribunal; their blood being considered as a sort of sin-offering to take away the guilt of the land, and the fate imposed upon the Canaanites, under a special dispensation, being impiously and cruelly applied to them.

Several Lowland officers, in the service of the Covenanters, interceded for Dalgetty on this occasion, representing him as a person whose skill would be useful in their army, and who would be readily induced to change his service. But on this point they found Sir Dugald unexpectedly obstinate. He had engaged with the King for a certain term, and, till that was expired, his principles would not permit any shadow of changing. The Covenanters, again, understood no such nice distinction, and he was in the utmost danger of falling a martyr, not to this or that political principle, but merely to his own strict ideas of a military enlistment. Fortunately, his friends discovered, by computation, that there remained but a fortnight to elapse of the engagement he had form-

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ed, and to which, though certain it was never to be renewed, no power on earth could make him false. With some difficulty they procured a reprieve for this short space, after which they found him perfectly willing to come under any engagements they chose to dictate. He entered the service of the Estates accordingly, and wrought himself forward to be Major in Gilbert Ker's corps, commonly called the Kirk's Own Regiment of Horse. Of his farther history we know nothing, until we find him in possession of his paternal estate of Drumthwacket, which he acquired, not by the sword, but by a pacific intermarriage with Hannah Strachan, a matron somewhat stricken in years, the widow of the Aberdeenshire Covenanter.

Sir Dugald is supposed to have survived the Revolution, as traditions of no very distant date represent him as cruising about in that country, very old, very deaf, and very full of interminable stories about the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and the bulwark of the Protestant Faith.

READER! THE TALES OF MY LANDLORD are now finally closed, and it was my purpose to have addressed thee in the vein of Jedediah Cleishbotham; but, like Horam the son of Ashmar, and all other imaginary story-tellers, Jedediah has melted into thin air.

Mr. Cleishbotham bore the same resemblance to Ariel, as he at whose voice he rose doth to the sage Prospero; and yet so fond are we of the fictions of our own fancy, that I part with him, and all his imaginary localities, with idle reluctance. I am aware this is a feeling in which the reader will little sympathize; but he cannot be more sensible than I am, that sufficient varieties have now been exhibited of the Scottish character, to exhaust one individual's powers of observation, and that to persist would

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be useless and tedious. I have the vanity to suppose, that the popularity of these Novels has shown my countrymen, and their peculiarities, in lights which were new to the Southern reader; and that many, hitherto indifferent upon the subject, have been induced to read Scottish history, from the allusions to it in these works of fiction.

I retire from the field, conscious that there remains behind not only a large harvest, but labourers capable of gathering it in. More than one writer has of late displayed talents of this description; and if the present author, himself a phantom, may be permitted to distinguish a brother, or perhaps a sister shadow, he would mention, in particular, the author of the very lively work, entitled "Marriage."

END OF A LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

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NOTES TO

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

1. Page 34. Reginald Scott tells of an old woman who performed so many cures by means of a charm, that she was suspected of witchcraft. Her mode of practice being inquired into, it was found, that the only fee which she would accept of, was a loaf of bread and a silver penny; and that the potent charm with which she wrought so many cures, was the doggerel couplet in the text.

2. Page 41. A walk in the vicinity of Holyrood-house, so called, because often frequented by the Duke of York, afterwards James II., during his residence in Scotland. It was for a long time the usual place of rendezvous for settling affairs of honour.

3. Page 43. *Stickit*, imperfect.

NOTES TO A LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

1. Page 66. The beautiful pass of Leny, near Callender, in Monteith, would, in some respects, answer the description.

2. Page 95. Such a bet as that mentioned in the text is said to have been taken by MacDonald of Keppoch, who extricated himself in the manner there narrated.

3. Page 107. *Dourlach*—quiver; literally, satchel—of arrows.

4. Page 113. The patronymic of MacDonell of Glengarry.

5. Page 114. *Wowf*, i. e. crazed.

6. Page 124. *Grumach*—ill-favoured.

7. Page 133. The Covenanters encamped on Dunse Law, during the troubles of 1639.

8. Page 144. In the reign of James VI., an attempt of rather an extraordinary kind was made to civilize the extreme northern part of the He-

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bridean Archipelago. That monarch granted the property of the Island of Lewis, as if it had been an unknown and savage country, to a number of Lowland gentlemen, called undertakers, chiefly natives of the shire of Fife, that they might colonize and settle there. The enterprise was at first successful, but the natives of the island, MacLeods and MacKenzies, rose on the Lowland adventurers, and put most of them to the sword.

9. Page 166. The military men of the times agreed upon dependencies of honour, as they called them, with all the metaphysical argumentation of civilians, or school divines.

The English officer, to whom Sir James Turner was prisoner after the rout at Uttoxeter, demanded his parole of honour not to go beyond the walls of Hull without liberty. "He brought me the message himself,—I told him I was ready to do so, provided he removed his guards from me, for *fides et fiducia sunt relativa*; and, if he took my word for my fidelity, he was obliged to trust it, otherwise, it was needless for him to seek it, and in vain for me to give it; and therefore I beseeched him either to give trust to my word, which I would not break, or his own guards, who, I supposed would not deceive him. In this manner I dealt with him, because I knew him to be a scholar." —*Turner's Memoirs*, p. 90. The English officer allowed the strength of the reasoning; but that concise reasoner, Cromwell, soon put an end to the dilemma: "Sir James Turner must give his parole, or be laid in irons."

10. Page 187. Such a story is told of the heiress of the clan of Calder, who was made prisoner in the manner described, and afterwards wedded to Sir Duncan Campbell, from which union the Campbells of Cawdor have their descent.

11. Page 188. Harp.

12. Page 189. In old English, *ka me ka thee*, i. e. mutually serving each other.

13. Page 195. The precarious state of the feudal nobles introduced a great deal of espionage into their castles. Sir Robert Carey mentions his having put on the cloak of one of his own wardens to obtain a confession from the mouth of Geordie Bourne, his prisoner, whom he caused presently to be hanged in return for the frankness of his communication. The fine old Border castle of Naworth contains a private stair from the apartment of the Lord William Howard, by which he could visit the dungeon, as is alleged in the preceding chapter to have been practised by the Marquis of Argyle.

14. Page 225. In fact, for the admirers of archery it may be stated, not only that many of the Highlanders in Montrose's army used these antique missiles, but even in England the bow and quiver, once the glory of the bold yeomen of that land, were occasionally used during the great civil wars.

15. Page 235. A species of apparition, similar to what the Germans call a Double-Ganger, was believed in by the Celtic tribes, and is still considered as an emblem of misfortune or death. Mr. Kirke, (See Note to Rob Roy, Vol. II. p. 75,) the minister of Aberfoil, who will no doubt be able to tell us more of the matter should he ever come back from Fairy-land, gives us the following:—

"Some men of that exalted sight, either by art or nature, have told me they have seen at these meetings a double man, or the shape of some man in two places, that is, a superterranean and a subterranean inhabitant perfectly resembling one another in all points, whom he, notwithstanding, could easily distinguish one from another by some secret tokens and operations, and so go speak to the man his neighbour and familiar, passing by the apparition or

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resemblance of him. They avouch that every element and different state of being have animals resembling those of another element, as there be fishes at sea resembling Monks of late order in all their hoods and dresses, so as the Roman invention of good and bad dæmons and guardian angels particularly assigned, is called by them ane ignorant mistake, springing only from this originall. They call this reflex man a Co-Walker, every way like the man, as a twin-brother and companion haunting him as his shadow, as is that seen and known among men resembling the originall, both before and after the originall is dead, and was also often seen of old to enter a hous, by which the people knew that the person of that likenes was to visit them within a few days. This copy, echo, or living picture, goes at last to his own herd. It accompanied that person so long and frequently for ends best known to its selve, whether to guard him from the secret assaults of some of its own folks, or only as an sportfull ape to counterfeit all his actions."—KIRKE's *Secret Commonwealth*, p. 3.

The two following apparitions, resembling the vision of Allan M'Aulay in the text, occur in Theophilus Insulanus, (Rev. Mr. Fraser's Treatise on the Second Sight, Relations x. and xvii.)

"Barbara Macpherson, relict of the deceased Mr. Alexander MacLeod, late minister of St. Kilda, informed me the natives of that island had a particular kind of second sight, which is always a forerunner of their approaching end. Some months before they sicken, they are haunted with an apparition, resembling themselves in all respects as to their person, features, or clothing. This image, seemingly animated, walks with them in the field in broad daylight; and if they are employed in delving, harrowing, seed-sowing, or any other occupation, they are at the same time mimicked by this ghostly visitant. My informer added farther, that having visited a sick person of the inhabitants, she had the curiosity to inquire of him, if at any time he had seen any resemblance of himself as above described; he answered in the affirmative, and told her, that to make farther trial, as he was going out of his house of a morning, he put on straw-rope garters instead of those he formerly used, and having gone to the fields, his other self appeared in such garters. The conclusion was, the sick man died of that ailment, and she no longer questioned the truth of those remarkable presages."

"Margaret MacLeod, an honest woman advanced in years, informed me, that when she was a young woman in the family of Grishornish, a dairy-maid, who daily used to herd the calves in a park close to the house, observed, at different times, a woman resembling herself in shape and attire, walking solitarily at no great distance from her, and being surprised at the apparition, to make further trial, she put the back part of her upper garment foremost, and anon the phantom was dressed in the same manner, which made her uneasy, believing it portended some fatal consequence to herself. In a short time thereafter she was seized with a fever, which brought her to her end, and before her sickness and on her deathbed, declared the second sight to several."

16. Page 241. This last character is historical.

17. Page 242. Mhich-Connel Dhu, the descendant of Black Donald.

18. Page 257. In German, as in Latin, the original meaning of the word Ritter, corresponding to Eques, is merely a horseman.

END OF VOLUME II.

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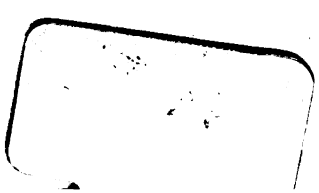

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